

# Agenda – Children, Young People and Education Committee

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Meeting Venue:	For further information contact:
Hybrid – Committee room 4 Tŷ Hywel and video conference via Zoom	Naomi Stocks Committee Clerk
Meeting date: 17 January 2024	0300 200 6565
Meeting time: 09.30	<a href="mailto:SeneddChildren@senedd.wales">SeneddChildren@senedd.wales</a>

## Hybrid

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### Private pre-meeting

(09.15 – 09.30)

### 1 Introductions, apologies, substitutions and declarations of interest

(09.30)

### 2 Welsh Government Draft Budget 2024–25 – evidence session 2

(09.30 – 11.00)

(Pages 1 – 98)

Jeremy Miles MS, Minister for Education and Welsh Language

Owain Lloyd, Director of Education and Welsh Language

Jo-Anne Daniels, Director of Tertiary Education

Attached Documents:

Research Brief

Private Paper

Paper – Welsh Government

### 3 Papers to note

(11.00)

#### 3.1 Scrutiny of the Children's Commissioner for Wales

(Pages 99 – 101)



Attached Documents:

Additional information from the Children's Commissioner for Wales following the scrutiny session on 29 November 2023

**3.2 Welsh Government White Paper on Ending Homelessness in Wales**

(Pages 102 – 112)

Attached Documents:

Letter from the Chair of the Children, Young People and Education Committee to the Minister for Climate Change

**3.3 Do disabled children and young people have equal access to education and childcare?**

(Pages 113 – 115)

Attached Documents:

Letter from the Minister for Economy

**4 Motion under Standing Order 17.42(ix) to resolve to exclude the public from the remainder of the meeting**

(11.00)

**5 Welsh Government Draft Budget 2024–25 – consideration of the evidence**

(11.00 – 11.30)

# Agenda Item 2

Document is Restricted

By virtue of paragraph(s) vi of Standing Order 17.42

Document is Restricted

Children, Young People and Education Committee

Date: 17 January 2024

Time: 10:00-12:00pm

Title: Evidence paper on Draft Budget 2024-25 – Education and Welsh Language Main Expenditure Group (MEG)

This paper provides information to the Children, Young People and Education (CYPE) Committee on the Education and Welsh Language (EWL) Main Expenditure Group (MEG) proposals outlined in the draft Budget 2024-25<sup>1</sup>, published on 19 December 2023. It also provides an update on specific areas of interest to the Committee.

Draft Budget 2024-25 is the final year of the three-year spending review, building on the work undertaken on the 2023-24 budget and following the UK Government’s Autumn Budget on 22 November.

1. **Cross Cutting Areas**

1.1 **Transparency of budget presentation**

1.1.1 The table below provides an overview of indicative plans for the EWL MEG published in draft Budget 2024-25:

Education and Welsh Language MEG – Summary	2024-25 Indicative (Final Budget 2023-24 - Feb 2023)	2024-25 Reprioritised Funding to Reserves	2024-25 Revised Baseline	2024-25 Other Changes	2024-25 Draft Budget (Dec 2023)
£000s					
Fiscal resource (revenue)	1,814,255	-102,985	1,711,270	7,500	1,718,770
Non-Fiscal resource (non-cash)	517,950	0	517,950	478	518,428
<b>Total Resource</b>	<b>2,332,205</b>	<b>-102,985</b>	<b>2,229,220</b>	<b>7,978</b>	<b>2,237,198</b>
Capital	355,614	-10,000	345,614	2,788	348,402
<b>Total Resource &amp; Capital</b>	<b>2,687,819</b>	<b>-112,985</b>	<b>2,574,834</b>	<b>10,766</b>	<b>2,585,600</b>
Resource AME <sup>[1]</sup>	73,225	0	73,225	-66,641	6,584
Capital AME	1,181,714	0	1,181,714	103,513	1,285,227
<b>Total AME</b>	<b>1,254,939</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,254,939</b>	<b>36,872</b>	<b>1,291,811</b>
<b>Total – EWL MEG<sup>[2]</sup></b>	<b>3,942,758</b>	<b>-112,985</b>	<b>3,829,773</b>	<b>47,638</b>	<b>3,877,411</b>

***Fiscal resource (revenue)***

1.1.2 When we published our 2022 Welsh Spending Review, we set out ambitious plans for education up to 2024-25. This included revenue increases to the MEG of £188m in 2022-

<sup>1</sup> Within this paper, ‘/’ refers to an academic year which spans the period from 1 August to 31 July and ‘-’ refers to a financial year which spans the period from 1 April to 31 March.

[1] Annually Managed Expenditure

[2] Main Expenditure Group

23, with further increases of £50m in 2023-24 and £38m in 2024-25. Last year's draft budget provided further revenue increases of £13.5m in 2023-24 and 2024-25.

1.1.3 However, the scale of the financial challenges facing the Welsh Government has meant some difficult decisions to reshape our budget for 2024-25. Every portfolio was asked to undertake a rescoping exercise to identify funding to be released to support the pressures we face on a cross-government basis, with the changes broadly proportionate to the size of the departmental budgets as a share of the overall Welsh budget. For Education, this has resulted in the reprioritisation of just under £103m (5.68% of 2024-25 indicative baseline) to provide extra funding and protection for the services which matter most to people and communities across Wales – the NHS and the core local government settlement, which funds schools, social services and social care and other everyday services. Within the Education portfolio we have protected pre-16 education budgets as far as possible, which has meant some difficult choices to refocus funding from further and higher education, including our demand led student support budget. A summary of these changes is outlined at Annex A and further detail is provided within Annex B and the specific areas section of this paper. The process has been guided by the budget principles to protect core, frontline public services as far as possible, deliver the greatest benefit to households which are hardest hit, to prioritise jobs, wherever possible and to work in partnership with other public sector bodies to face this financial storm together.

1.1.4 The reprioritisation is offset by allocations from central reserves totalling £7.5m. This includes £3.5m for the reprioritisation of funding for Universal Provision of Free School Meals (UPFSM) through the Co-operation Agreement and £4m for the Education Mutual Investment Model (MIM) for annual service charges. Further details of these changes are included in the relevant sections of this paper (section 2.3 for UPFSM) and at Annex B.

***Non-fiscal resource (non-cash)***

1.1.5 The non-cash budget for the EWL MEG has increased by £0.478m in 2024-25 with the following allocations from Reserves:

<b>Education and Welsh Language: Non-cash Budget Allocations</b>	<b>BEL</b>	<b>2024-25 £000</b>
Cover for the amortisation of intangible fixed assets relating to database development and depreciation of IT equipment for the Education Workforce Council (EWC)	Teacher Development & Support	400
Additional requirement for the Commission for Tertiary Education & Research (CTER)	CTER	78
<b>Total Non-Cash from Reserves</b>		<b>478</b>

***Capital***

1.1.6 The three-year spending review published back in December 2021 set out capital spending plans from 2022-23 until 2024-25. This included £300m per annum for the Sustainable Communities for Learning (SCfL) Programme, £20m per annum for Higher Education, £15m per annum for Welsh-medium capital and £25m in 2024-25 for Childcare and Early Years (£8m has been re-profiled from 2023-24 into 2024-25 to increase funding to £33m) (see sections 2.21-2.23). In this draft budget we have reprioritised £10m from education capital budgets to provide scope for a capital to revenue switch in 2024-25. To minimise the impacts of this change in allocation we will prioritise core projects within the SCfL programme.

- 1.1.7 There is an allocation of £2.788m from reserves for Financial Transactions (FT) capital for Education MIM loans via the Development Bank of Wales for Bridgend County Borough Council (two primaries) and Cardiff and Vale College (Vale campuses).

### ***Annually Managed Expenditure (AME)***

- 1.1.8 The Annually Managed Expenditure (AME) budget is related to student loans which are demand led and sensitive to interest rate and other macro-economic factors and therefore difficult to forecast. This budget is agreed with the Treasury each year and is fully funded. The AME draft Budget figures reflects the forecasts submitted to the Office for Budget Responsibility in September 2023.

## **1.2 Commentary on Actions & Detail of Budget Expenditure Line (BEL) Allocations**

- 1.2.1 A breakdown of changes to the Education and Welsh Language MEG by BEL for 2024-25 is provided at **Annex A**. The report provides detail on 2023-24 First Supplementary Budget allocations, 2023-24 forecast outturn (period 7) and 2022-23 final outturns as requested by the Committee. A commentary explaining the changes to each Action within the MEG is also provided at **Annex B**. A transparent narrative explanation has been provided to explain increases and reductions, where not covered in the evidence paper, and confirmation of where the transfers have been allocated to/from. For 2024-25 draft budget, the indicative allocations for 2024-25 presented in Final Budget 2023-24, published on 28 February, have been used as the baseline budget for comparative purposes.

## **1.3 Education Priorities & Other Strategic Priorities**

- 1.3.1 Our national mission is to achieve high standards and aspirations for all by tackling the impact of poverty on educational attainment and supporting every learner. Working with our partners across the education sector we are delivering our ambitious programme of education reforms, Programme for Government and Co-operation Agreement commitments.

- 1.3.2 In March 2023, we published [Our national mission: High standards and aspirations for all](#), as a successor to the previous Education in Wales action plan. It provides a strategic roadmap for our collective action in the education sector to secure improvements for all learners. The roadmap does not include any new policy commitments, and for the first time it reflects action being taken across the whole Education and Welsh language portfolio, and is articulated under six core themes:

- Learning for life
- Breaking down barriers
- A positive education experience for everyone
- High-quality teaching and leadership
- Community based learning
- Cymraeg belongs to us all.

- 1.3.3 As part of budget preparations, the Minister for Finance and Local Government and I, alongside Cabinet colleagues, have discussed the level of resources to support education, and in particular front-line funding to schools. To safeguard as far as possible core funding to schools, we have protected the Local Government Revenue Support Grant (RSG) as part of the budget changes for 2023-24, announced on 17 October. For 2024-25, we are

continuing to protect the Local Government settlement, by maintaining the planned 3.1% increase between 2023-24 and 2024-25.

- 1.3.4 As part of the Programme for Government, we have committed to reducing the administrative burden on local authorities (LAs), to allow them to focus on their vitally important work delivering services. At the heart of this work is our desire to ensure that LAs are not hampered by unnecessary bureaucracy. We know that in order to relieve pressure on both local government and Welsh Government at this time of stretched resources, the need to identify, reduce, and eliminate burdensome or unnecessary process and provide more flexibility is stronger than ever. We have worked closely with LAs to understand their concerns and grants management was the key area identified for change to achieve mutual benefit.
- 1.3.5 In this draft budget we propose a new approach for pre-16 education grant funding with the aim of reducing the burden on our LAs and schools. We will be rationalising and consolidating our grants currently provided to LAs and regional consortia and partnerships. From 2024-25, we are proposing to amalgamate the Local Authority Education Grant, Regional Consortia, Pupil Development Grant and Welsh Language grants into one grant scheme called the Local Authority Education Grant (LAEG). This grant scheme will be made up of four elements of education funding: School Standards, Equity, Reform and Cymraeg 2050, with each strand presented as separate Budget Expenditure Lines (BELs) to aid transparency. This funding will allow further flexibility for our trusted LA partners, whilst they help us deliver on our policy objectives. In total £379m will be provided through the LAEG in 2023-24, which is in line with the funding provided for similar grants in 2023-24 and a 3.2% (£11.8m) increase against the 2024-25 indicative budget for the grants transferring in. A summary of the areas included as part of the amalgamation grant process and associated transfers is included at **Annex C**.
- 1.3.6 Despite the rescoping exercise we have been able to maintain funding that supports Programme for Government commitments, including:
- boosting funding in relation to the Recruit, Recover and Raise Standards Programme established to help learners overcome the negative effects of the pandemic and to support the most vulnerable and disadvantaged learners, with £10.9m of extra funding being routed through the School Standards strand of the new LAEG;
  - protecting the extra £9m invested last year for the Pupil Development Grant (PDG) that funds schools to support our most economically vulnerable learners, with funding transferring to the Equity in Education strand of the new LAEG (see section 2.3); and
  - protecting the extra £4.5m invested last year to support to implement the Additional Learning Needs Act, with funding of £22m now being routed through the LAEG (see section 2.10).
- 1.3.7 This budget reflects the following allocations linked to the Co-operation Agreement with Plaid Cymru:
- £93.5m in 2024-25 to roll out UPFSM within the lifetime of the agreement, which includes an extra £3.5m from Reserves agreed with Plaid Cymru following the re-profiling of funding from 2022-23 (see section 2.3); and
  - £4.5m in 2024-25, through freezing funding at 2023-24 level (which has released £3.5m as part of the rescoping exercise), for the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol and the National Centre for Learning Welsh to increase the proportion of apprenticeships and further education opportunities that are available through the medium of Welsh, and to provide free Welsh language learning for 16-25 year olds (see section 2.19).



- 1.3.8 In terms of the cross-cutting impacts of our spending plans, supporting those who are most vulnerable to the cost-of-living crisis, as well as funding to support children and young people's physical, emotional and mental health wellbeing remains a priority when allocating resources.
- 1.3.9 Value for money and clarity over how we use our resources effectively is central to delivering our priorities, particularly as we move to recover from the pandemic. Once expenditure is planned in line with priorities, we have well-established processes in place to ensure that resources are used effectively for the purposes intended. The governance and monitoring procedures in place reflect the nature of our relationships with delivery partners. These budget proposals reflect my continuing commitment to protect and prioritise investment that supports preventative measures as far as possible.

## **1.4 Children's rights and other cross-cutting considerations**

### ***Children's Rights Impact Assessment***

- 1.4.1 Detailed impact assessments, including a Children's Rights Impact Assessment (CRIA) are undertaken as part of our ongoing policy development and review. A Strategic Integrated Impact Assessment (SIIA) is one of a suite of documents published as part of the draft Budget and is critical to identifying key trends, strategic and cumulative impacts at portfolio level, across a range of areas, including giving due consideration across the statutory requirements.
- 1.4.2 We continue to maintain that the integrated approach underpinning the SIIA enables us to better understand the intersectional and unintended impacts of spending decisions and to maximise the impact of available funding, reducing the disproportionate effect on any one specific group or area. To consider an area of impact in isolation risks unintended consequences such as the negative impact in one area being driven by a positive impact in another.
- 1.4.3 We have been working with Children in Wales, Young Wales Project Board and officials across Welsh Government, to co-produce a Young Person's version of the Budget Improvement Plan, which will be published at the end of January 2024. An animated version has also been developed to engage with young people and help them understand how the Welsh Government works and what the Welsh Treasury does. The animation is set to be launched in January and will take place at the Senedd.

### ***Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015***

- 1.4.4 We continue to be guided by the five ways of working in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 to improve how we make decisions. We recognise the need to collaborate with our partners and to use our collective resources effectively to plan for the tough choices ahead. Our decision to protect funding for the PDG and ALN recognises the importance of prioritising investment that supports preventative measures.
- 1.4.5 We continue to work with the Future Generations Commissioner and a range of experts to assess how we are addressing the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act. Our new curriculum is broad, balanced, inclusive and challenging, however we recognise that

curriculum reform in isolation will not provide sustainable change. The new curriculum has been designed to maximise its contribution to each of the well-being goals.

## 1.5 Costs of Legislation

### ***Details of allocations within the 2024-25 budget intended for the implementation of the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021 and associated qualifications reform.***

1.5.1 The costs related to implementation of the Curriculum and Assessment (Wales) Act 2021 are set out within the curriculum reform section 2.5.

### ***Details of allocations for implementing the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 and the wider ALN Transformation Programme.***

1.5.2 The costs related to implementation of Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 and the wider ALN Transformation Programme in 2024-25 are set out within the ALN reform section 2.10.

### ***Details of allocations within the 2024-25 budget intended for the implementation of the Tertiary Education and Research (Wales) Act 2022.***

1.5.3 2023-24 is the final, transitional year in the establishment of the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research (CTER) and no specific costs associated with the implementation of the Tertiary Education and Research (Wales) Act 2022 have been identified beyond this point. Further detail on CTER is outlined in section 2.8.

### ***Information on the financial impact of any relevant UK Parliament legislation.***

1.5.4 We are not aware of any UK Parliament legislation that may impact on our budget for 2024-25. However, we continue to monitor UK Government's Legislative Programme and will ensure that individual impact assessments, including development of Regulatory Impact Assessments (RIAs) will be taken where necessary.

### ***Financial implications in 2024-25 of any relevant subordinate legislation.***

1.5.5 The budget will continue to take account of relevant subordinate legislation in 2024-25. Assessing the costs of implementing legislation and the impact on those it affects is an essential part of ensuring that the principles of "Good Law" are followed. Draft regulations are subject to a robust assessment of costs and benefits, achieved through consultation and engagement with our stakeholders, in the development of the RIAs. This is to ensure our decisions are informed by the people who will be affected by them.

## 1.6 Impact of COVID-19 pandemic

### ***Information on any remaining impact of the pandemic on the Education and Welsh Language MEG in 2023-24 and any ongoing implications in 2024-25, including an update on budget arrangements for meeting these, for example whether the "Recruit, Recover, Raise Standards (RRRS)" programme is continuing in 2024-25***

1.6.1 Schools and education settings continue to operate in a very challenging context and are continuing to manage the far-reaching impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, including

persistent levels of absenteeism and worsened behaviour in classrooms, and mental health and wellbeing issues. There is little evidence that the impacts of Covid have dissipated and further financial pressures will impact on how schools and other education settings manage the ongoing impacts of the Covid 19 pandemic for children and young people.

- 1.6.2 As previously outlined, for 2024-25 the RRRS programme will now sit within the School Standards funding element provided to LAs through the LAEG. Funding for the RRRS programme was due to taper down from £37.5m in 2023-24 to £28.5m in 2024-25. Whilst the programme was intended to be time limited, it is clear that the effects of the pandemic have not gone away.
- 1.6.3 Therefore for 2024-25, we have been able to re-prioritise funding within the MEG to boost the School Standards element of the LAEG by £10.9m to further support schools in these challenging financial times. This will mean that, not only are we ensuring the planned tapering of RRRS funding (£9m) is being reversed to maintain that consistent funding level to schools, but an additional £1.9m is also being provided to uplift this element of the grant. This takes School Standards funding within the LAEG to £159.9m for 2024-25, which includes funding previously supported via the Education Improvement Grant (£115.2m) and Foundation Phase Nursery (£5.3m).

***Details and breakdown of the funding allocated for the education sector's response to the pandemic, in 2022-23, plus any allocation in 2024-25 (essentially an update to paragraphs 1.6.5-1.6.6 of last year's paper)***

- 1.6.4 For 2022-23 there were no changes to the funding outlined in last year's paper. In 2023-24, the following amounts have been allocated:
- £37.5m for continuation of the RRRS Programme;
  - £5.33m to support learner wellbeing and progression in schools;
  - £12m for Additional Learning Needs;
  - £2m for additional counselling provision; and
  - £3.5m for attendance to support and encourage learners who are disengaged or at risk of disengaging.
- 1.6.5 In 2024-25, the majority of this funding will be awarded through the new LAEG grant to LAs.
- 1.6.6 The [Post-16 COVID 19 Recovery Funding Evaluation 2022-2023](#) and Welsh Government research into the effect of the pandemic on learners at Further Education Institutions has demonstrated that there is a continued need for additional learning sessions as learners have gaps in their knowledge and skills. Learners are requiring additional support with careers guidance and choosing appropriate education and training pathways. Officials will continue to work with stakeholders to consider the most appropriate ways forward to further improve and develop the post-16 education systems' resilience and readiness for long-term future challenges.
- 1.6.7 Recognising the continued impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic on post-16 learners, the Post-16 Learner Recovery and Progression funding has been protected from reductions in 2024-25, ensuring a further £10.562m is allocated to support learners with additional group-based or 1-1 interventions.

**1.7 Impact of Brexit**

***An update on whether there are any specific financial implications for the 2024-25 Education and Welsh Language MEG from the UK's withdrawal from the EU, and any allocations made to mitigate these.***

1.7.1 There are currently no European projects within the EWL MEG and therefore no impact on budget allocations for 2024-25. Further detail on our Taith programme for learners, which replaced the popular Erasmus+ scheme, is set out under section 2.19. It means that Wales and its international partners can continue to benefit from exchanges in a similar way to the opportunities that flowed from Erasmus+, both in Europe and further afield.

**1.8 Impact of cost-of-living pressures on delivery of education services**

***An update on the implications of cost-of-living pressures and high energy prices on the operational delivery of education institutions – across early years, schools, colleges, universities and training providers.***

1.8.1 Like all public services, inflationary and cost of living pressures (energy costs, food costs, pay) are putting all education institutions including schools, FE and HE institutions under significant pressure. This financial year has seen continued increases in energy costs as existing contracts expired and price-caps were removed. We recognise the pressures on local authorities and other public services and that there are no easy answers. We continue to engage closely with our stakeholders on these issues. They continue to meet from their own resources the costs of a number of measures to support staff and students through the ongoing costs of living crisis.

1.8.2 Core funding for schools is provided through the Local Government settlement and we have protected the Revenue Support Grant to ensure schools are prioritised.

1.8.3 FE institutions have faced increased costs of consumables used in the delivery of vocational learning programmes. Increases in timber, steel and other materials and resources have increased rapidly. In previous years the Welsh Government has been able to provide additional funding of over £2m to recognise these costs and ensure that learners have suitable opportunities to put learning into practice. However, in-year prioritisation of the 2023-24 budget has meant that we could not continue this support in 2023/24 which will have some impact on learners ability to practice learning in certain vocational pathways.

**1.9 Budget monitoring**

***Information on the processes in place for monitoring budgets throughout the year, identifying potential deficits and surpluses, and taking remedial action or allocating additional funds to cover any shortfalls, particularly in light of the pandemic.***

1.9.1 Careful financial management is essential given the extraordinary financial pressures facing public services. All budgets continue to be monitored and challenged monthly during 2023-24, to consider the latest forecasts and budget movements as necessary and to ensure a balanced budget by year end. I receive regular financial updates on the forecasts for the MEG to ensure that budgets remain on track to deliver priorities.

***The implications for the Education and Welsh Language MEG of the issues referred to in the First Minister's statement of 9 August 2023 and reports of savings needed to be made in this financial year.***

1.9.2 The Minister for Finance and Local Government's update on the Welsh Government's financial position for 2023-24 on 17 October confirmed a reduction to Education revenue budgets of £74.7m (4.1%) and capital of £40m (11.2%) compared to the Final Budget 2023-24 (February 2023). A [summary of the main changes](#) was published alongside this statement, and will be formalised at the Second Supplementary Budget 2023-24 on 20 February 2024. As well as a review of all uncommitted budgets, the areas where we have been able to make reductions in revenue funding come from underspend in demand led budgets and grants, including student support grants. The forecast underspend on this budget has informed decisions around funding that could be offered for reprioritisation in 2024-25.

***Details of any changes to the 2022-23 Education and Welsh Language MEG that are already anticipated in the Second Supplementary Budget.***

1.9.3 In addition to the budget changes outlined in paragraph 1.4.2 above, there are a small number of other transfers planned for the Second Supplementary Budget 2023-24 outlined at Annex D (reflecting the position at the time of writing).

***The implications for the Education and Welsh Language MEG of the UK Government's Autumn Statement 2023.***

1.9.4 The UK Government's Autumn Statement published on 22 November contained no targeted support for the most vulnerable, nothing new or meaningful for Wales, and was a disaster for public services across the UK, which are being starved of necessary funding. There were no allocations made specifically to the EWL MEG as a result of the Autumn Statement.

## **2. Specific areas**

This section provides an update on specific areas requested by the Committee.

### **2.1 Funding for school budgets**

***An explanation of how the Welsh Government has prioritised funding for schools in the 2024-25 Draft Budget (in both the Finance and Local Government MEG and the Education and Welsh Language MEG) and taken account of the Sibieta review of school spending in its approach to setting this budget.***

2.1.1 The main source of funding the Welsh Government provides to schools is to local authorities through the local government settlement. As noted for 2024-25, we have committed to maintain the Local Government settlement at a 3.1% rise, with total annual core funding contribution of £5.7bn. In addition, we are providing £1.3m through the RSG to ensure that no authority has an increase in settlement of below 2%.

2.1.2 Over recent years we have been streamlining the monitoring and evaluation of our grants and the outcome of this can be seen in this year's grant awards. However, we need to accelerate this work to ensure that resources are being targeted and delivered in the most appropriate, efficient, and effective ways. Our new grant approach for pre-16 education is therefore a further simplification and streamlining of funding to local authorities and schools in line with our national mission of high standards and aspirations for all. From April 2024

we will be providing funding via the Local Authority Education Grant (LAEG) with four grant elements, namely: School Standards, Equity, Reform and Cymraeg 2050.

- 2.1.3 Simplification also means looking at how these grants are administered. The *Review of School Spending in Wales* underlined the unnecessary complexity in our system, and the issue has been raised as part of workload negotiations. The [Review of Roles and Responsibilities of Education Partners in Wales](#), announced in July, has also highlighted frustrations with the grant funding process, the bureaucracy associated with it and the uncertainty it causes for school leaders.
- 2.1.4 The new grant approach will mean we are investing £379m as part of the LAEG in 2024-25. We will work with all partners over the next few months ahead of the new financial year to ensure the new arrangements are bedded in.
- 2.1.5 There is some funding which remains outside of this new approach. These are our demand-led schemes where specific claims on actual demand are necessary for payment purposes and include, UPFSM, School Essentials, NPQH and Post-16 Specialist Placements funding.

***An update on any work the Welsh Government is carrying out to consider amendments to the School Funding (Wales) Regulations 2010.***

- 2.1.6 A wide range of Welsh Government portfolios are involved in the education system and the funding available to our young people. Many areas cut across and are relevant to a number of the recommendations both in the review by Luke Sibieta and the CYPE Committee's 2019 School Funding in Wales report. Therefore, we have established an internal stakeholder group to coordinate and manage this work.
- 2.1.7 We have also invited local authorities and trade unions to complete an informal questionnaire and established a working group with local authority representatives.
- 2.1.8 Further to this, we have also commissioned various pieces of research to ensure we have the latest evidence to help inform policy making. This includes research on the use and effectiveness of PDG funding, which was undertaken by Bangor University. We published this [report](#) in September 2023. We are also looking at alternative ways of identifying socio-economic disadvantage to further support funding allocations in the future and are in the process of commissioning a piece of research on this.

***The Minister's perspective on the level of school budget reserves, in the context of the 31 March 2023 data due to be published in late October 2023.***

- 2.1.9 In the latest statistical release, school reserves decreased from £301m in 2022, to £208m on 31 March 2023; a decrease of £93m (31%) from the previous year. Whilst school reserve levels still appear to be high as of March 2023, we know that some schools are in a deficit position. We are now seeing schools using these reserves to manage the increasing pressures being faced as a result of inflation and the cost-of-living crisis. We support local authorities in working with their schools to manage their budgetary positions flexibly in light of the current circumstances.
- 2.1.10 Schools and local authorities are under significant financial pressure and there are no easy answers to resolving the issues being faced. We know it is vital that communication

channels are active during these especially difficult times and are engaging closely with local government on the budget and other issues.

## 2.2 Funding for school improvement

### ***An explanation of how the Draft Budget 2024-25 supports school improvement and raising standards of education.***

2.2.1 Budgets across the EWL MEG support school improvement and the raising of school standards. School improvement services are provided through local authorities. We are therefore protecting the local government settlement, which provides core funding to schools, and within the departmental budget we have reshaped our spending plans to focus on pre-16 education to drive-up school standards.

2.2.2 As outlined, the streamlining of our grants will help ensure that resources are being targeted and delivered in the most appropriate, efficient, and effective ways. Through the creation of a School Standards strand of the LAEG, we will see funding of nearly £160m directed at schools and other settings to support school improvement and learner recovery post-pandemic to raise standards. In recognition of the importance and need to further support school improvement and raising standards, we have increased the budget, from the 2024-25 indicative position, by £10.9m (3.2%). This will mean our schools and settings will be able to continue to support our learners in the best way they can with the resources available to them.

### ***Details of the Regional Consortia School Improvement Grant (RCSIG) allocations 2023-24, broken down by objective and/or funding description– essentially an update to Annex D of last year’s paper. Details of how much RCSIG was paid to each consortium and/or local authority in 2023-24.***

2.2.3 The tables at **Annex E** provide a breakdown of the RCSIG which totals £158.4m for 2023-24, together with total funding by consortium or local authority.

### ***Information on the Education Improvement Grant element of the RCSIG and the review that was underway when the budget was discussed last year.***

2.2.4 Following engagement with the regional consortia, partnerships and local authorities, we collated information on the current funding formulas used across Wales for EIG funding. This varied across regions and highlighted complexities in this funding allocation method. The Review of Roles and Responsibilities of Education Partners in Wales has also re-enforced the need for less complexity and more transparency of EIG funding.

2.2.5 The EIG budget has been included in the amalgamation of education grants; it forms part of the School Standards funding component of the LAEG. We intend to apply a national funding formula to the School Standards funding. Details of this formula will be published annually, ahead of the financial year. This will enable schools to easily establish how much funding they will be receiving for the upcoming financial year to assist with their budgetary planning.

## 2.3 The cost of living and reducing the impact of deprivation on educational outcomes

***Information on how resources within the Education and Welsh Language MEG are being used to meet the Welsh Government's long-term commitment to reduce the impact of deprivation on educational outcomes.***

- 2.3.1 Tackling the impact of poverty on attainment is at the heart of our national mission in education. The PDG has a key part to play in achieving this and we will build upon existing effective practice by ensuring that we target the funding as well as possible.
- 2.3.2 Funding will continue to be allocated on the basis of £1,150 per eligible learner and passported directly to schools by the LA. PDG funding directly supports schools to mitigate the impact of poverty upon children by providing additional funding for learners from low income households and care experienced children. It also supports the objectives of the Welsh Government's draft Child Poverty Strategy.
- 2.3.3 The School Essentials grant also has an important role to play and has made a significant difference to many lower income families across Wales, helping to reduce the worry surrounding the purchase of school uniform and equipment, enabling children and young people to attend school and take part in activities at the same level as their peers. The grant was extended in 2021-22 to children and young people in all compulsory school years who are eligible for means tested free school meals or looked after by a Local Authority.

***A breakdown of the "Tackling barriers to attainment" BEL for the Pupil Development Grant (PDG) and the School Essentials Grant and an update of how eligibility for these is assessed, given the main qualifying criteria (eligibility for free school meals) is moving to universal provision in primary schools.***

- 2.3.4 As part of the work to reduce the administrative burden for LAs and consolidate the grant landscape, PDG funding of £127.825m will be transferred from the Tackling Barriers to Attainment BEL to the new combined Equity in Education BEL of the LAEG in 2024-25. There is no change to this budget compared with 2023-24. Funding continues to be allocated on the basis of the number of learners eligible for free school meals (eFSM) in the Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) census for the preceding year (PLASC 2023 for 2024-25 allocations).
- 2.3.5 Following an administrative transfer to shift funding for the service children grant (£0.27m) to the Vulnerable Groups BEL, the remaining budget within the Tackling Barriers to Attainment BEL (4764) of £13.885m and is proposed to include:
- School Essentials grant (£13.096m) – whilst the grant has reduced by £0.5m to reflect the reduction in the number eFSM learners in PLASC 2023. This is a demand-led budget and there is no change to entitlement for eligible learners ((£125 per learner or £200 for those entering year 7).
  - Equity and Attainment Programmes (£0.789m)
- 2.3.6 My written statement issued in December 2021 acknowledged that in offering every primary aged learner a school meal for free it was possible that we would no longer be able to use Free School Meal eligibility as a proxy indicator for socio-economic disadvantage for children in this age group.
- 2.3.7 The Statement set out we needed to work closely with partners, and right across government, to consider the impact of any potential changes to the way in which we record



those eligible for free school meals, and any associated data sets. This is to ensure that we minimise turbulence to both funding allocations, entitlements to learners and families, and ways of working going forward. Officials are taking forward a three-stage research project scoping why and how the Welsh Government and public sector partners use the eFSM indicator, and to explore suitable options to meet needs in the future for data on learner socioeconomic deprivation. The first stage research has gone out tender with all stages expected to be complete within 12 months.

2.3.8 Parents/guardians continue to be encouraged in a communications campaign to register their eligibility for means-tested free school meals as this forms part of the criteria for funding for PDG and School Essentials.

***Information on how resources within the Education and Welsh Language MEG are being used to support learners in post-16 education with the impact of cost-of-living pressures, and to address the impact of deprivation on outcomes (including, for example, through additional hardship funding for providers, or through existing student support funding such as the Education Maintenance Allowance).***

2.3.9 Full-Time learners can access further education free of charge, regardless of age which reduces barriers for all learners to access full-time education. The post-16 funding methodology includes an educational deprivation uplift, which allocates funding to a Local Authority or FE college based on the top four deciles of the Education domain of the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation. This creates a funding uplift of £3.732m for local authority sixth forms and £18.933m for FE colleges.

2.3.10 The Financial Contingency Fund (FCF) can help eligible learners in a FE college who are facing financial difficulties. This could help with costs such as fees, course related costs, transport, meals, and childcare costs. The type of support provided, and eligibility is determined by the individual FE college. In 2023-24 FCF core funding was increased from £6.33m to £6.71m to recognise the impacts of increased costs of living and to support those learners that might not otherwise access education. This budget has been protected from reductions in 2024-25.

2.3.11 Statutory maintenance support for students undertaking courses of higher education was increased by 9.4% for the 2023/24 academic year. We remain mindful of the importance of funding for living costs, with support through a mixture of grants and loans which is progressive: those from low income backgrounds are eligible for higher levels of grant. Rates for 2024/25 will be confirmed early in the new year and no later than March 2024. Despite a reduction to the student support grants of £53.9m in 2024-25, the budget is demand led and the same support is planned to be made available to all undergraduates for 2024/25.

2.3.12 In line with Programme for Government we have not only protected the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) but increased in April 2023 to £40 per week for eligible young people attending post compulsory education. It is planned that EMA will remain at that level for 2024/25. As recommended by the CYPE Committee, an independent review of EMA is being commissioned with recommendations from this review being considered for 2025/26 and in line with available budgets at that time.

***The costs of the expansion of free school meals in 2023-24, 2024-25 and future years, and an update on the schedule for extending FSM throughout all primary school age groups.***

2.3.13 As part of our Co-operation Agreement with Plaid Cymru there is a commitment to roll out UPFSM within the lifetime of the agreement. Originally £200m revenue was allocated over three years to deliver this commitment: £40m for 2022-23, £70m for 2023-24 and £90m in 2024-25. Following agreement from Plaid Cymru, due to an underspend in 2022-23, £7.4m has been re-profiled into 2023-24 to support the provision of free school meals in the school holidays (until May half term) and £3.5m into 2024-25. As part of the in-year re-prioritisation exercise £11.5m was offered up, reducing the budget to £58.5m for 2023-24 (£65.9m including re-profiling). This is a demand-led grant to LAs and, despite the reduction, there remains sufficient funding to cover the current roll out plans this financial year. For 2024-25, this budget reflects an allocation of £3.5m from Reserves for UPFSM, increasing the budget to £93.5m in 2024-25. This budget provides scope to respond to the findings of the unit rate review through increasing the unit rate. It also allows room for growth in take up above the current take up level of approximately 70%, retaining £5.1m at an uptake level of 80%, providing flexibility to respond to any emerging issues in-year.

2.3.14 There was also £60m capital funding (£25m in 2021-22 and £35m in 2022-23) for local authorities to invest in improvements to school catering facilities, including purchasing equipment, upgrading existing kitchen facilities, and updating digital systems. We anticipate that this funding will be sufficient for the majority of local authorities and although there is no capital funding ringfenced for UPFSM in 2023-24 and 2024-25, we will continue to review bids as needed on a case by case basis, with funding allocated through the SCfL Programme.

2.3.15 LAs are continuing to roll-out the offer, with all on track to complete roll-out by the end of the Co-operation Agreement. Since the beginning of the new academic year in September 2023:

- 13 local authorities are currently rolling out to all primary year groups;
- 6 local authorities have rolled out up to year 4 with Years 5 and 6 expected to be rolled out in April 2024; and
- The remaining 3 local authorities have rolled out up to Year 3 with the other year groups expected to be rolled out from April 2024 onwards.

2.3.16 As a result of the roll-out of universal free school meals in primary schools, more than 145,000 primary school children are now eligible for a free school meal and are offered at least one nutritious meal as part of the school day. More than 11 million additional meals have been served since September 2022.

***A further breakdown of the funding provided to local authorities in 2023-24 for UPFSM and for 2024-25 if known.***

2.3.17 Revenue allocations made to all LAs in 2023-24 are calculated on the following basis:

- A set unit rate per meal;
- 86% uptake of the offer among newly eligible learners according to each LA's plans for rollout (calculations are based on the difference between all pupils on PLASC 2022 minus those eligible for free school meals under income/benefit-related criteria or through Transitional Protection arrangements, which represents the anticipated total expansion); and
- A fee to cover additional administration costs incurred.

2.3.18 The grant is demand-led with LAs preparing monthly claims on the actual numbers of meals served. Any variances less than or greater than 86% meals served are adjusted in the payments made.

2.3.19 Local authority revenue allocations for the 2023-24 financial year are set out at **Annex F**. Revenue allocations for 2024-25 are not yet available and will be informed by the planning process in the new year, which in partnership with LAs local roll-out plans.

***Any other funding within the Education and Welsh Language MEG for initiatives to tackle the cost of living and the deprivation/attainment negative correlation, for example school holiday enrichment/summer of fun/food and fun projects.***

2.3.20 We have maintained funding to support the School Holiday Enrichment Programme (SHEP) at £4.85m for 2024-25 with funding allocated from the Food and Nutrition in Schools BEL. This is in line with funding allocated for 2023-24, where 175 schemes ran during summer 2023 offering 11,100 places each day schemes ran to learners in areas of social-economic disadvantage, including support for 1:1 and ALN. In addition, this year, in response to the cost-of-living crisis, the majority of LAs offered learners attending schemes a 'bag bwyd' (a bag containing pantry staples) to take home.

2.3.21 Recent evaluation has shown that in 2022 the Programme was successful in its aim of supporting school engagement and aspirations and positive impacts were observed on children's physical activity, diet and emotional well-being during the summer holidays.

2.3.22 We continue to maintain our School Milk scheme. For those schools who opt-in, the Welsh Government provides free milk for foundation years and subsidised milk for those in Key Stage 2. This ensures that pupils in reception, year 1 and year 2 can receive a free glass of milk each day or at a reduced cost for pupils in years 3-6. Whilst there has been a £0.2m reduction to the school milk budget in 2024-25 as part of the reprioritisation exercise (to £3m), the budget is demand led and remains available to all schools in Wales who wish to participate.

2.3.23 We maintain our commitment to offer free breakfasts in primary schools and continue to work with local authorities to increase take-up. Funding for the Primary Breakfast scheme is allocated through the Revenue Support Grant to LAs.

## **2.4 Education workforce**

***Details of budget allocations to finance Initial Teacher Education (ITE) and professional learning for current teachers, including in light of the ongoing implementation of education reforms.***

### Initial Teacher Education

2.4.1 There is dedicated funding within the Teacher Development and Support BEL to support ITE as follows:

- £2.85m to deliver the 'alternative ITE routes'. These are the Part-time PGCE and the Salaried PGCE, which alongside the full-time PGCE form our suite of high-quality routes into teaching in Wales. The alternative ITE routes are intended to widen participation into the teaching workforce and to support schools to strategically grow their own

teaching workforce from their local community. Expansion and support of the alternative ITE routes are commitments under the Welsh in education workforce plan and the Anti-racist Wales plan. Both programmes will continue to be available in the 2024/25 and 2025/26 academic years. The budget has reduced by £0.5m for 2024-25 as part of the reprioritisation exercise and this is based on the projected number of candidates. The funding provides grants, which include training grants for students and salary contribution grants for schools supporting an ITE Student on the Salaried PGCE, Wales' employment based ITE qualification. Both the part-time and the salaried programmes prepare teachers for the workforce in either primary or priority secondary subjects (Science, Maths, English, Welsh, Design and Technology, and Computing). The budget is demand-led with spend highly dependent on recruitment onto the programmes.

- Approximately £2.72m to continue to deliver the Priority Subject & Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic incentive schemes intended to support recruitment into the profession via ITE. The budget is demand-led and is highly dependent on recruitment levels into full-time and part-time ITE programmes. This budget has been reduced by £0.3m for 2024-25 as part of the reprioritisation exercise based on projections of uptake. Both schemes are paid at certain points across an ITE programme and in a teacher's early career. Applicants have several years in which to claim the last instalment. Therefore, each year's budget allocation will cover several cohorts up until their respective deadline dates. The final allocation and spend varies depending on demand in the previous year.
- Approximately £0.745m for the Iaith Athrawon Yfory Welsh-medium incentive scheme, which is targeted at student teachers preparing to teach secondary subjects through the medium of Welsh, or Welsh as a subject. The line is demand-led and highly dependent on recruitment levels into full time and part-time ITE programmes. The incentive scheme is paid at two points in a teacher's early career (on award of qualified teacher status and on completion of statutory induction) and applicants have several years in which to claim each instalment. Therefore, each year's budget allocation covers several cohorts up until their respective deadline dates and the final allocation and spend varies depending on demand in the previous year.
- A further £0.160m will continue to be made available in 2024-25 to support costs relating to developing evidence informed policy to continue to support the Welsh Government's ITE reforms. It is proposed that this funding will support the ongoing recruitment of Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic student teachers into ITE as well as supporting events to mature and support our the ITE Partnerships.
- Up to £0.250m will again be allocated in 2024-25 to continue the communications and marketing campaign for Teaching Wales.

### Professional learning for the workforce

2.4.2 We want all practitioners to have access to quality professional learning to enable them to deliver high standards and aspirations for all. The National Professional Learning Entitlement, published in September 2022, will play a key role in our journey to achieving this. The Entitlement sets out how the continued development of practitioners will support the schools or settings in which they work and their learners to realise the four purposes of Curriculum for Wales, supporting learners with additional learning needs and embedding equity, well-being and the Welsh language across the whole-school community.

2.4.3 In 2024-25 we will be allocating approximately £35.5m to support the development and delivery of professional learning. This represents a reduction of approximately £0.3m compared to the £36m allocated in 2023-24. This saving is being made against the delivery of the National Masters in Education as it is a demand-led programme and therefore projections have been based on trends in uptake.

2.4.2 Approximately £21.4m is being transferred into the new Reform strand of the LAEG with the plan for £12m of the total funding to be allocated directly to schools. The remaining £9m is allocated for specific professional learning programmes including the teaching assistants, leadership and Curriculum for Wales programmes. A further £2.57m will be transferred into the new Cymraeg 2050 strand of the LAEG to support Welsh-medium and Welsh language professional learning.

2.4.3 The remainder of the total professional learning funding, which is approximately £11.5m, will be allocated via various routes including the National Academy for Educational Leadership and universities to support a number of priorities and to enable all practitioners, including teachers, supply teachers, teaching assistants and leaders to access professional learning.

***Information on funding provided by the Welsh Government to the Education Workforce Council.***

2.4.4 Grant funding of £7.726m is planned to be allocated to the Education Workforce Council (EWC) in 2024-25 (within the Teacher Development and Support BEL) to support the following activities:

- Administration and notification of Qualified Teacher Status (QTS);
- Induction appeals and certification;
- Administration of the Induction programme for Newly Qualified Teachers;
- The maintenance and development of the Professional Learning Passport;
- The maintenance and development of the Educators Wales website; and
- Secretariat to Welsh Pay and Conditions Review Body.

2.4.5 This is a reduction of just over £1.2m compared to their total resource budget of £9.031m in 2023-24 and relates in the main to the removal of the £1m registration fee contribution from the Welsh Government to subsidise registration fees. The EWC will be asked to continue with the collection of registration fees on the same basis at the subsidised rates, and by doing so, this reduction will not impact on the fees for teachers and other education professionals.

***Details of any budget provision for meeting the costs of the teachers' pay award for academic year 2023/24 including a breakdown between the 2023-24 and 2024-25 financial years and the respective mechanisms used (whether direct grant or incorporated into the local government settlement).***

2.4.6 The increase of 5% across all teacher scale points and allowances from September 2023 equates to an estimated increase to the overall pay bill of £46.5million in 2023-24 (September 2023 to March 2024) and £79.7 million for the full year impact in 2024-25.

2.4.7 Whilst the funding provided through the local government settlement is un-hypothecated and for each local authority to determine its own priorities, specific additional funding was provided by the Welsh Government towards the Year 1 elements of the pay award, but no specific additional funding has been provided for the Year 2 elements of the pay award i.e.

the 5% rise from September 2023 or for the ongoing baseline rise in costs. There is a reasonable expectation that the academic year 2023/24 element of the pay award, and associated financial impact for 2023-24 financial year, would be met from within the existing local government settlement. In 2023-24, local authorities received £5.5bn from the Welsh Government in core revenue funding and non-domestic rates to spend on delivering key services. This equated to an increase of 7.9% or £403 million on a like-for-like basis compared to the previous year (£412m cash increase), with no authority receiving less than a 6.5% increase. As noted, the planned 3.1% increase to the settlement is protected for 2024-25.

***Information on any funding to support policy regarding the supply teaching workforce.***

2.4.8 In August 2022 I agreed plans to reform pay, conditions and employment of supply teachers, to deliver the commitments set out under the Programme for Government and Co-operation Agreement. As part of the reforms a revised supply agency framework has been procured and the contracts started in September 2023. Also, a new booking platform has been procured and is currently being rolled out.

2.4.9 The cost of implementing and operating the booking platform are dependent on uptake by LAs and schools. Costs for the 2024-25 financial year will depend on the roll-out and implementation of the model based on discussions with local authorities (estimated at between £0.5m and £1.05m per financial year). There is no specific budget provision within the EWL MEG and therefore these costs place an additional commitment on the Teacher Development and Support BEL.

## **2.5 Curriculum Reform**

***Information on funding to support the implementation of the Curriculum for Wales, including professional learning for the workforce.***

2.5.1 To support the ongoing process of Curriculum for Wales implementation, including our emphasis on supporting learner progression and school cluster working, we are continuing to prioritise our investment in schools and settings. As signalled in last year's budget for 2024-25, we are maintaining the additional investment of £1.66m for schools in 2024-25 for this work, reflecting ongoing impacts of the pandemic on learner progression. Alongside this, and as set out in the [Curriculum Annual Report](#), published on 5 July, baseline funding to schools to support their curriculum implementation in 2024-25 is reducing in line with projected implementation costs as the curriculum rolls-out across schools and settings.

2.5.2 The funding for curriculum support of just under £11m will form part of the new Reform strand of the LAEG from 2024-25. The Reform strand of the LAEG will direct £54.3m across Curriculum and ALN reforms reflecting our priority in supporting schools and settings in their implementation of these reforms. Our planned total directly attributable provision for Curriculum for Wales implementation across the budget, which includes funding to schools, is estimated at some £31m in 2024-25 (subject to final funding allocations).

2.5.3 This funding remains essential in helping ensure successful roll-out of our transformational curriculum by supporting the ongoing engagement of practitioners, schools and settings in their curriculum reform, Qualifications Wales and the ongoing development of associated bilingual resources.

2.5.4 Further detail on professional learning for the workforce is detailed in section 2.4 (education workforce).

## 2.6 Emotional and mental health of children and young people

### ***Budget provision from the Education and Welsh Language MEG in 2024-25 for the whole-school/system approach to emotional and mental health.***

2.6.1 The indicative baseline budget for the whole school approach (WSA) was £13.6m for 2024-25 (£7m Health and Social Services (HSS) MEG and £6.6m EWL MEG). This compares to a starting baseline of £12.4m for 2023-24 (£7m HSS MEG and £5.4m EWL MEG).

2.6.2 As part of our grant amalgamation plans, funding to local authorities for the whole school approach of £4.75m for 2024-25 is due to transfer to the new amalgamated LAEG. This includes the funding allocated to LAs in 2023-24 (£2.1m for school based counselling, £1.1m for LA provision (training and interventions) and £350k for LA PRU provision) as well as the planned rise in funding of £1.2m for 2024-25 to support the expansion of school based counselling support and the delivery of training and interventions linked to wellbeing in schools via LAs.

2.6.3 Funding supports a range of activity in line with the requirements of the statutory WSA Framework guidance published in 2021. Mental Health in general and specific commitments around supporting school-based counselling are PFG commitments. The remaining funding not transferring to the LAEG (£1.85m) will support a range of activity and work with the third sector, development of resources and research and evaluation.

2.6.4 Our priority is to maintain support for LA direct interventions in schools for children and young people and staff. When setting new grant criteria we will seek to ensure that wellbeing is recognised as a priority which underpins all aspects of learning, and is an investment to save, as we know that prevention, early identification and support can ensure that problems do not escalate to the point they require more intensive support later in life.

### ***Details of funding from the Health and Social Services MEG to complement work in schools on this area.***

2.6.5 Funding of £7m is being maintained for the whole school approach within the Health and Social Services MEG for 2024-25, recognising the cross-cutting nature of this work and emphasising our commitment to progressing this agenda. Taken together with the funding in the EWL MEG, funding will ensure we are able to support wellbeing needs, from building resilience to more targeted interventions for learners to ensure their needs can be met outside of specialist services, bringing savings and efficiencies for those services.

2.6.6 In 2023-24 we have provided over £5.3m to Health Boards to support the national CAMHS school in-reach service. The service provides dedicated mental health practitioners in schools providing consultation, liaison, advice and training to teachers and other school staff, with the objective of ensuring early identification and provision of appropriate and timely support. A similar level of funding will be made available for the service's continuation in 2024-25. The remaining funding will be used to support implementation of the statutory whole school approach framework and compliment the funding made available through the EWL MEG.

***Information on any budget provision to support the emotional and mental health of young people in post-16 education.***

- 2.6.7 Since 2020, the Welsh Government has invested over £20m to support the mental health and wellbeing of learners and staff in further education. This included additional funding during and following the Covid pandemic, to reflect the pandemic's impact on the mental health of young people and adults.
- 2.6.8 In the 2023/24, the funding allocated to the further education sector for mental health and wellbeing totals £4m. The majority is allocated directly to institutions for front line support, which includes counsellors and other specialist staff who support wellbeing. It also includes investment in collaborative and national projects designed to benefit the whole FE sector.
- 2.6.9 Officials work closely with the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Hub, who support colleges to develop and embed trauma-informed practices. Other initiatives include research into support for young carers in FE, and the roll-out of staff wellbeing representatives across all colleges in Wales, working with Joint Trade Unions.
- 2.6.10 From 1 April 2024, funding for mental health and wellbeing in FE will become the responsibility of CTER. We anticipate that work will continue to support the needs of learners and staff, building on and extending the practice that has been developed over the past four years.

***Budget provision for the action plan and wider response to tackle peer on peer sexual harassment among learners.***

- 2.6.11 For 2024-25, £0.15m from the Tackling Disaffection BEL will be made available to support our ongoing response to the CYPE committee inquiry into peer on peer sexual harassment.

## **2.7 Pupil absence**

***Information on any specific budget provision to address rates of pupil absence or an identification of which budget lines support such work more generally.***

- 2.7.1 As part of our grant amalgamation plans, funding of £7.225m from the Community schools BEL for Family Engagement officers (£6.532m) and Community Focused School Managers (£0.693m) will transfer to the Equity strand of the new LAEG (Equity in Education BEL). Greater engagement with families has been shown to have a positive impact on improving attendance in schools.
- 2.7.2 Funding of £2.5m will also transfer from the Tackling Disaffection BEL to the Equity Strand of the LAEG, for LAs to maintain their current level of Education Welfare Officers. Maintaining this funding at the same level provided in 2023-24 enables the Welfare service to provide support early and focus on preventative measures before attendance becomes an issue. It also enables the service to provide more intensive, one-to-one support for those pupils with high rates of non-attendance.
- 2.7.3 Funding of £2.5m from the Tackling Disaffection BEL will support projects that may arise as a result of the Attendance Task Force. The Task Force has been established to set priorities



and identify further tangible actions and drive improvements in attendance and re-engage learners.

## 2.8 Sport and physical activity

***Information on how the Education and Welsh Language MEG supports the provision of sport and physical activity for children and young people, whether inside or outside school, and how this relates to any funding in the Health and Social Services MEG such as for Healthy Weight, Healthy Wales.***

2.8.1 Officials responsible for the Health and well-being Area of learning and experience are working closely across government and with external partners to ensure that this curriculum Area is supported; e.g. with colleagues in Sport branch; Health and wellbeing responsible for the Healthy Weight, Healthy Wales programme; Sport Wales and Public Health Wales. This is to ensure alignment with this new Area of the curriculum and that budget allocations from the related areas mentioned above are maximised.

2.8.2 New schools funded through the SCfL Programme provide new sports facilities as an integral part of each new school project, with alterations and improvements also being incorporated through refurbishment projects. The Community Focus Schools is a key Programme for Government commitment and with £40m capital investment over the financial years 2023-24 and 2024-25. Funding will be focused on small scale capital works that will enable community use of the existing facilities through such things as improving external lighting (sports areas), providing storage for equipment (extra-curricular activities by community groups), modifications to changing rooms and toilets, outside shelters, and security measures to segregate school and community use areas supporting physical activity for young people and their families outside the school day.

## 2.9 Support for Minority Ethnic and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners

***Details of funding to support the education of Minority Ethnic and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners in 2024-25 and how this is being distributed).***

2.9.1 As part of the work to reduce the administrative burden for LAs and consolidate the grant landscape, funding of £11m to support Minority Ethnic and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners will be transferred from the School Improvement Grant BEL to the Equity strand of the LAEG (Equity in Education BEL) in 2024-25. There is no change to this budget compared with 2023-24.

2.9.2 In 2021 following recommendations of a working group, Local Authorities agreed to move to a distribution formula based on numbers of children with English as an Additional Language (EAL) plus numbers of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children and young people, based on aggregated data from the PLASC.

2.9.3 To mitigate the impact of the change in formula, for 2023-24, allocations are based on 75% latest PLASC data and 25% on each Local Authority's share of the grant in 2022-23. This dampens the impact of the financial changes on individual Local Authorities and ensures that the method moves closer to one based on the latest data.

2.9.4 For distribution of the grant in 2024-25, the Working Group will be re-established in January 2024 to agree the next step in moving to the new distribution formula.

## 2.10 Additional Learning Needs

***An updated assessment of the pressures facing local authorities, schools, and colleges in delivering current SEN/ALN provision, the impact of additional funding in previous years and whether further additional funding will be provided in 2024-25.***

***Information on funding provision for the implementation of the 2018 Act, including an updated assessment of whether the ALN reforms are proving to be cost-neutral.***

2.10.1 On the 28 November, I made an [oral statement](#) on the implementation of the ALN reforms. Implementing both ALN and Curriculum reforms during a period of unprecedented challenges has been a significant undertaking. Whilst LAs and schools are united in their enthusiasm for person-centre practices and planning, transitioning from one system to another demands time and patience.

2.10.2 During 2023-24 the implementation timelines were extended from three years to four years, to respond to workload pressures, create more flexibility, and protect quality of practice, plans, and provision that meets the needs of learners. An additional £4.5m was invested from 2023-24 to increase resources in schools to implement the ALN system and lead whole-school strategies to embed inclusive education.

2.10.3 This budget protects and continues to prioritise £25.591m investment in 2024-25 in the costs associated with ALN reform and boosts resources to support ALN learners, to be met from the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) BEL. To support the ongoing implementation of ALN reform we are continuing to prioritise our investment in schools and settings, post 16 provision and Local Authorities in line with previous years.

2.10.4 The funding to LAs and schools for ALN reform of £22m will form part of the new Education Reform strand of our LAEG to local authorities from 2024-25. The grant will direct a total £54.3m across Curriculum and ALN reforms reflecting our priority in supporting schools and settings in their implementation of these reforms (subject to final funding allocations).

2.10.5 This £22m ALN funding for LA's and schools will maintain additional resources to implement the new ALN system. As signalled in last year's budget, for 2024-25 this represents a continued boost of £4.5m. Of the funding transferring, approximately £10m is for schools and settings in 2024-25, reflecting the additional workload during the transition phase from SEN to ALN on the ALNCo's role, and work to embed a whole school approach to planning for, and meeting the needs of ALN learners. This also includes approximately £11m investment for local authorities to plan for, and respond to additional learning needs, as well as support leadership, oversight and implementation of ALN reform on a local footprint.

2.10.6 This funding remains essential to maintain implementation progress, respond and meet needs of ALN learners, and take action to respond to evidence and recommendations set out in the Estyn Thematic review for LAs, schools and the Welsh Government.

- 2.10.7 We continue to fund training for new educational psychologists, channelling over £2.6m between 2022-23 and 2024-25. Trainees are required to commit to spending the first two years of their career working for local authorities in Wales.
- 2.10.8 Within the Post-16 Provision BEL, in 2023-24 funding for learners with ALN in the FE sector was increased from £15.525m to £16.871m. This funding is being protected and maintained for 2024-25 to help colleges provide the additional support which is necessary for learners with ALN to succeed on their chosen programmes of study. In line with 2023-24, for 2024-25 £0.7m is available within the ALN BEL to support all FE colleges to implement the ALN Act.
- 2.10.9 For 2024-25, within the Post-16 Specialist Placement BEL, we are maintaining £13.9m for specialist FE provision to meet existing demand for learners with ALN and complex needs up to the age of 25, who require specialist FE provision in order to access further education and training suitable to their needs. From September 2023 there is a gradual transition of duties to local authorities who are responsible for making decisions and securing placements for young people (those in year 11 in school years 2022/23 and year 11&12 in school year 2023/24) with ALN in independent specialist post-16 institutions. The Welsh Government continues to be responsible for making decisions regarding funding placements for young people currently in Year 13 up to 25 years old who require access to specialist provision. Funding will transfer to LAs in September 2025.
- 2.10.10 The evaluation will explore views from across the system on the efficacy of funding allocations for ALN. This will include an exploration of how perceived or actual funding constraints are impacting on the successful implementation of the ALN system.

## **2.11 Estyn**

### ***Details of Estyn's core budget allocation for 2024-25 from the Finance and Local Government MEG and details of any additional funding from the Education and Welsh Language MEG for Estyn's role in education reforms.***

- 2.11.1 The total budget allocation for Estyn within the Estyn BEL of the Finance and Local Government MEG is being maintained at £16.343m for 2024-25, consisting of fiscal resource (£15.893m), non-fiscal resource (£0.2m) and capital (£0.25m).
- 2.11.2 For revenue, this includes £4.87m that transferred from the Education and Welsh Language MEG as part of Final Budget 2023-24. This funding was to enable Estyn to carry out an increased rate of inspections to complete the current cycle, following the suspension of inspections from March 2020 to February 2022. The funding was also meant to support the development of more regular inspection activity from September 2024; and to support the consolidation of pay awards for prior years. Whilst we have protected Estyn's budget it has not been possible to meet inflationary pressures for 2024-25 and we will work with Estyn closely to manage these impacts.

## **2.12 Qualifications**

### ***Details of funding allocated to Qualifications Wales in 2024-25 and details of any additional funding for its work on qualifications reform in the context of the new Curriculum for Wales.***

- 2.12.1 Qualifications Wales' budget for 2024-25 is being maintained at the same level as 2023-24, with a total budget of £10.507m (fiscal resource of £10.007m, non-fiscal resource of £0.25m and capital of £0.25m).
- 2.12.2 This annual grant includes funding for the ongoing reform of 14-16 qualifications led by Qualifications Wales. This work will see the development of a new suite of qualifications available to learners (14-16 yrs old), including GCSEs, to ensure these are reflective of and aligned to the Curriculum for Wales.

## 2.13 Welsh-medium education

### ***Details of budget provision to support the Welsh Government's Welsh-medium education strategy and local authorities' Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESPs), as well as the education sector's role in meeting the Cymraeg 2050 target of one million Welsh speakers.***

- 2.13.1 The [Cymraeg 2050 Work Programme for 2021-26](#), set out our plan for this Senedd term. The education sector has an important role to play in meeting both high level *Cymraeg 2050* targets: doubling daily language use and reaching a million Welsh speakers by 2050. There are a number of budgets within the Welsh in Education BEL, and other BELs across the MEG, which contribute to our work of reaching those targets within the education sector.
- 2.13.2 As part of our grant amalgamation proposals for pre-16 education grants, funding that supports schools and LAs with the objectives of Cymraeg 2050 will be consolidated into the Cymraeg 2050 strand of the LAEG. This element of funding will be crucial to the delivery of the forthcoming Welsh Language Education Bill. The Cymraeg 2050 (LAEG) BEL will provide total funding of £9.77m through the LAEG, including funding for the Welsh in Education Grant (School Improvement Grant BEL), Professional Learning (Teacher Development and Support BEL), late immersion provision (Welsh in Education) and Siarter Iaith (Welsh Language BEL).
- 2.13.3 All local authorities in Wales implemented their 10-year WESPs in September 2022 and have submitted their annual WESP review reports in July 2023 outlining progress made against their targets within the first year of their Plans. The WESP annual review reports have been assessed and feedback has been provided to each local authority. Whilst the increase in the number and percentage of learners varies across Wales, the first annual review reports show us that decisive action has been taken by the majority of local authorities to lay firm foundations for progress during the lifespan of the WESPs.
- 2.13.4 The Education Infrastructure BEL of the MEG continues to provide budget to increase capacity in Welsh-medium schools, establish new Welsh-medium provision, support late immersion provision as well as support learners of all ages to improve their skills and confidence in Welsh. Funding of £30m was announced in March 2021 to support capital projects dedicated to growing the use of the Welsh language in education according to local WESP needs. This was the second tranche of investment from the Welsh-medium Capital Grant, established in 2018 to support capital projects dedicated to supporting and growing the use of the Welsh language in education. In October 2022, £7.1m funding was approved to support a number of Welsh-medium capital projects previously on the reserve list from the second tranche of funding. Following a further review in July 2023, additional funding of £14.5m was agreed in principle, subject to approval of a business case. These projects will make a substantial contribution to Welsh-medium education across Wales. The total investment since 2018 stands at just under £129m.

2.13.5 Late immersion continues to play an important part in our work to increase the percentage of learners who attend Welsh-medium education. Funding of £2.2m has been maintained as noted will transfer from the Welsh in Education BEL to the Cymraeg 2050 strand of the LAEG.

2.13.6 In 2024-25, we will continue to provide funding of £3m to Mudiad Meithrin to expand and strengthen this provision. Funding will also continue to enable them to run the Sefydlu a Symud / Set up and Succeed (SAS) programme which focuses solely on establishing new Welsh-medium early years provision in areas of Wales where there is a current lack of such services as an access point to Welsh-medium education.

***Information on funding allocated for enhancing the Welsh in education workforce.***

2.13.7 Funding is available within the Teacher Development and Support BEL to support the implementation of our 10-year [Welsh in Education Workforce Plan](#). The total funding available in 2024-25 is £8.15m with a further £2.57m transferred into the new Cymraeg 2050 (LAEG) BEL.

2.13.8 Approximately £4.3m will be prioritised to support the aims of the plan and will be mainly targeted at increasing the number of Welsh-medium teachers. Funding will be prioritised for the following activities:

- Continuation of the primary to secondary conversion programme.
- Continuation of the grants to schools to develop innovative solutions to addressing teacher shortages.
- Funding to support the viability of Welsh A Level provision in schools and FE Colleges.
- The second year of the teacher retention bursary.
- Funding for CYDAG to support collaboration across Welsh-medium schools in a number of policy areas.

2.13.9 The Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol will continue to allocate £0.150m from their grant (Welsh in Education BEL) in 2024-25 to develop two specific projects:

- pilot a financial scholarship and mentoring for undergraduate learners to support them to prepare for ITE through the medium of Welsh; and
- develop networks to engage with Welsh-speaking graduates studying in England and promote opportunities for them to return to Wales to prepare to teach.

2.13.10 We continue to provide incentives for student teachers from Wales undertaking ITE and have maintained the Iaith Athrawon Yfory incentive of £5,000 for each student who is preparing to teach secondary subjects through the medium of Welsh. This is funded from the ITE budget within the Teacher Development and Support BEL (section 2.4 refers).

2.13.11 Professional learning is a key feature of our approach to strengthening Welsh-medium teaching capacity and supporting practitioners to develop their Welsh language skills in accordance with the Professional Standards for Teaching and Leadership. We are working with our partners to ensure that practitioners are identified and supported to engage with professional learning in order to improve the teaching of Welsh in English-medium schools and to support all schools to move along a continuum.

2.13.12 Approximately £3.8m will be allocated within the Teacher Development and Support BEL in 2024-25 to the Sabbatical Scheme to deliver intensive Welsh language and language teaching methodology professional learning for practitioners. Courses are available on a range of levels for teaching assistants and teachers. The majority of this budget funds the supply costs related with releasing practitioners from schools to undertake the courses. This has increased for 2024-25 to account for the higher cost of paying for supply cover to enable practitioners to engage with the courses.

2.13.13 Funding allocated to the National Centre for Learning Welsh also delivers access to free Welsh language lessons to all education practitioners. A new website was launched in July 2022 to provide information to practitioners about the provision available to them via the Sabbatical Scheme and the National Centre for Learning Welsh [Education Workforce | Learn Welsh](#). During 2024-25 the Centre will be developing new bespoke provision to meet the needs of the sector. For example, a pilot course for secondary teachers in English-medium schools with some Welsh will be developed to be delivered flexibly and a short on-line confidence / 'gloywi' course for those teaching in a range of settings. £0.5m will be allocated from the Teacher Development and Support BEL in 2024-25 to support this work.

2.13.14 In addition to the Sabbatical Scheme and provision via the National Centre, a total of £2.57m will be allocated to LAs as part of the amalgamated Cymraeg 2050 strand of the LAEG in 2024-25 to support the delivery of support for the teaching of Welsh and through the medium of Welsh. The funding is used collaboratively to support the development of national professional learning resources and provision for example to support practitioners who have completed the sabbatical scheme courses to use their new skills back at school; to support teaching assistants to model language patterns with learners and to support headteachers to plan strategically for the development of Welsh in their schools.

2.13.15 In addition, £4.5m is currently allocated to LAs as part of the Welsh in Education Grant (WEG), which was re-established in 2023-24 following discussions with local authorities. With 30% match funding from LAs the total value of the WEG is £5.85m. The WEG supports the delivery of local authority Welsh in Education Strategic Plans in three key areas:

- support for latecomer and late immersion centres;
- support for linguistic progression and for Welsh-medium and bilingual schools, and
- support the development of Welsh in English-medium schools.

2.13.16 The WEG will continue in 2024-25, with funding transferring from the School Improvement Grant BEL and will also be allocated as part of an amalgamated Cymraeg 2050 element of the LAEG to LAs.

## **2.14 Early years education and childcare**

### ***Whether the funding arrangements in place in previous years to support the harmonisation of funding rates in early years education and childcare continued in 2023-24 and are continuing in 2024-25***

2.14.1 Ministers agreed that from January 2021 additional funds should be made available to local authorities to enable them to increase funding to non-maintained nursery settings which deliver early education, to help align with the current Welsh Government funding rate for childcare within the Childcare Offer. To ensure an equitable approach across Wales we applied a standard formula to the funding.



2.14.2 In 2021-22 funding of £3.8m (funded jointly from the Health and Social Services MEG and Education and Welsh Language MEG) was provided in grants to LAs to contribute to the harmonisation of funding rates in non-maintained settings. In 2022-23, early education funding was increased by a further £1.5m from the HSS MEG to reflect the increase in the Welsh Government funding rate for childcare (from £4.50 to £5) for the Childcare Offer. A recurrent transfer of £3.4m from the HSS MEG to EWL MEG was allocated in Final Budget 2022-23 to ensure funding is baselined within the Curriculum and Assessment BEL. Support has continued in 2023-24.

2.14.3 Our intention is that this support will continue to be provided in 2024-25. In total £5.268m is provided to continue this support, which as part of our grant amalgamation plans will transfer to the School Standards element (School Standards BEL) of the LAEG. We will continue to consider the importance of early education provision as and when funding for childcare is reviewed.

***Details of any other funding from the Education and Welsh Language MEG to support the non-maintained sector's delivery of early years education and the Curriculum for Wales (recognising that childcare is not in this Minister's portfolio).***

2.14.4 Early years was identified as a priority group during the pandemic and continues to be. Significant additional resources were provided to support well-being, physical and learning needs. The RRRS budget continues to support the early years cohort in 2023-24 including £3.75m for non-maintained settings. For 2024-25 funding the RRRS will be amalgamated into the LAEG and settings will benefit from continued funding through this new funding mechanism.

2.14.5 The Welsh Government continues to work closely with national childcare umbrella organisations – Early Years Wales, Mudiad Meithrin, National Day Nurseries Association and PACEY Cymru – to support the provision of early education in childcare settings. In 2023-24 financial support of £375k will have been provided to enhance the work of those organisations in supporting our youngest learners, and we recognise the importance of this work to continue to support Curriculum for Wales implementation in 2024-25. Particularly ensuring we embed foundation learning pedagogy and practices to continue to improve provision.

## **2.15 Youth work**

***Details of how the 2024-25 Education and Welsh Language MEG supports statutory and voluntary youth services and budget provision for meeting the Programme for Government commitments in respect of strengthening youth services.***

2.15.1 As a result of additional funding allocated over a three-year period from 2022-23 to 2024-25, the Youth Engagement and Employment BEL indicative baseline increased to £12.376m in 2024-25 (an increase of £4.92m when compared to 2021-22). In line with previous years, a further transfer of £3.7m to support Youth Homelessness is expected from the Climate Change MEG in a supplementary budget 2024-25 to bring the total budget to £16.076m in 2024-25.

2.15.2 As part of the cross-government rescoping exercise (paragraph 1.1.3 refers), savings of £1m have been identified for 2024-25, resulting in a revised allocation of £15.076m (once the £3.7m transfer from Climate Change MEG is actioned). This saving reflects the activities

planned to develop and take forward the Interim Youth Work Board's recommendations aimed at developing a sustainable delivery model for youth work in Wales.

- 2.15.3 This revised allocation will protect funding for grants to support and develop statutory and voluntary youth services in Wales, including funding provided to local authorities via the Youth Support Grant and funding to voluntary youth work organisations via the Strategic Voluntary Youth Work Organisation Grant.
- 2.15.4 Partnership approaches continue to be a central tenet of these programmes. As a continuation of further funding provided in 2023-24, additional funding has once again been allocated to the Youth Support Grant for 2024-25. This will enable local authorities to work in collaboration with local and national voluntary organisations to undertake additional work to improve diversity and inclusion within their services as well as develop further opportunities for young people to use their Welsh language skills as part of their youth work offer.
- 2.15.5 This budget contributes heavily towards support for some of our most vulnerable young people, including those with emerging emotional, mental health or wellbeing issues, and those at risk of youth homelessness. This targeted work builds on the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework, improving the ability of local authorities and their partners to identify and broker interventions for those most in need at the earliest opportunity. This includes continuation of £2.5m targeted funding to support young people with emotional wellbeing or mental health needs through non-clinical approaches and community-based youth work support.

***Details of how the 2024-25 Education and Welsh Language MEG supports the Youth Work Strategy for Wales and the work of the Implementation Board.***

- 2.15.6 The budget will continue to support the high-level vision set out in the Youth Work Strategy for Wales as well as the work of the Youth Work Strategy Implementation Board who were appointed in October 2022. This includes activities to take forward specific recommendations made by the Interim Youth Work Board as well as continued engagement with the youth work sector, stakeholders and young people to inform this work.

**2.16 Offender Learning**

***Information on budget provision in 2024-25 and any changes to how this will be spent compared to previous years.***

- 2.16.1 The Welsh Government funds (from monies provided to the Welsh Ministers specifically for this purpose by the UK government) the education and learning provision and prison libraries in Welsh prisons through a joint Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS). The three-year MOU with HMPPS, which covers the period 2022-25, has been signed and is in operation.
- 2.16.2 A budget of £7.328m is allocated for offender learning in 2024-25, which is consistent with funding for 2022-23 and 2023-24. Of this funding, £3.328m is allocated to cover the costs of learning and skills provision in public sector South Wales prisons (HMP Usk/Prescoed, Cardiff and Swansea). A further £4m is allocated to cover the costs of learning and skills provision in HMP Berwyn in North Wales.



## 2.17 Further education, Sixth Forms and Adult Community Learning

***Details of the complete 2023-24 allocations to further education colleges, to include the amounts of all components of the allocation (i.e. full-time, part-time, part-time allowance, deprivation, sparsity and Welsh-medium allowances, maintenance allowance and the Adult Learning Wales adjustment).***

2.17.1 This information has been provided at **Annex G**. 2022/23 saw the largest increase in core provision and support in many years and this was followed by further increases in 2023/24. Between 2019/20 and 2023/24 the FE mainstream budget increased by 29.26%.

***Details of any hypothecated funding to further education institutions or Sixth Forms beyond their usual core grants.***

2.17.2 At the time of writing, details of the 2024-25 (financial year) sixth form and 2024/25 (academic year) FE college allocations are not available. Hypothecated funding for Mental Health, Professional Learning Fund, Employment Bureau, ALS funding, FCF, Learner Recovery and SEREN are anticipated to continue in 2024-25.

***Details of any funding provided in the 2024-25 budget for achieving pay parity and/or to meet any pay award to further education institutions and Sixth Forms, including an explanation as to the sufficiency of the funding to meet in full any agreed pay award / pay equivalency over the period of this budget.***

2.17.3 At this stage negotiation of the 2023/24 pay award is still ongoing between the FE sector and unions. However, an additional 5% has been included in the unit rate of funding for the 2023/24 allocations. The sector has been informed that any negotiated pay award will need to be found from within mainstream funding including the unit rate increase. The same 5% increase to the unit rate was applied to school sixth forms. Additional funding of £6.662m was provided in 2023-24 to ensure the pay award was fully funded.

2.17.4 Whilst the 2024/25 FE and 2024-25 sixth form allocations will not be available until the end of January, with pay negotiations starting later in 2024, it is likely that a similar approach will be taken. The Welsh Government will provide a unit rate increase from which FE and sixth forms will need to manage the final pay award. This will be managed from within the final published budget with no funding provided specifically for pay parity.

### ***The allocation for Adult Community Learning***

2.17.5 At the time of writing, details of the 2024-25 adult community learning allocations are not available. Final allocations will be published before the end of January 2024.

***The complete 2022-23 and 2023-24 programme values used in the calculation of FE and Sixth Form funding.***

2.17.6 The 2022/23 programme values were provided to the Committee as part of last year's evidence paper (see Annex H). The 2023/24 programme values have been published within the [Programme Directory 2023/24](#). At the time of writing, details of the 2024/25 programme values are not available.

## 2.18 Higher education, and post-16 student financial support

***Details of the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research (CTER) allocation, including details of any hypothecated funding, or funding which is intended for specific activities including mental health and student well-being.***

- 2.18.1 As the Commission becomes operational in 2024-25 it will inherit financial decisions taken by the Welsh Government on the core funding of Further Education and recommendations made by HEFCW on funding for Higher Education.
- 2.18.2 Funding lines for higher and further education that originated in Education budgets which have been earmarked to transfer over to CTER are clearly identifiable on the face of the Draft Budget 2024-25 with '(CTER)' added at the end of the budget description. Further in year adjustments during 2024-25 will be made from Education and other Ministerial portfolios to cover the full remit of responsibilities for the commission. The full extent of in year transfers will be made available in 2024-25 Supplementary budgets.
- 2.18.3 Specific funding allocations, including any details of hypothecated funding, will follow in the Commission's funding letter.

***Details of any 2024-25 allocation intended for the delivery of degree apprenticeships and if it is intended to be used to recruit new apprentices or to teach out existing apprentices.***

- 2.18.4 As noted above the any details of hypothecated funding for the new Commission, including for degree apprenticeships, will be outlined in the Commission's funding letter. It is not possible to confirm the allocation at this stage.

***Details of any capital funding to be made available to CTER, including any conditions to be placed on it by the Welsh Government.***

- 2.18.5 As noted above, budgets lines for higher and further education which have been earmarked to transfer over to CTER are clearly identifiable on the face of the Draft Budget 2024-25 with '(CTER)' added at the end of the budget description. Further in year adjustments will be made from Education and other Ministerial portfolios to cover the full remit of responsibilities for the commission. The full extent of in year transfers will be made available in 2024-25 Supplementary budgets.
- 2.18.6 Specific funding allocations, including any details of hypothecated funding, will follow in the Commission's funding letter.

***Details of any contingencies / reserves / non-allocated funds within any of the 2024-25 tertiary education related BELs, including the BELs within the post-16 Learner Support Action; details of how the funds are / can be deployed; and details of any deployment of them during 2023-24.***

- 2.18.7 Funding within the Student Support Grants BEL of the Post-16 Learner Support Action is demand led, which by definition means that they are difficult to predict, manage or forecast and will fluctuate according to demographics and uptake of HE. Forecasts are produced using the Higher Education Division's student support models (incorporating the most up to date information on a number of variables, including student numbers, inflation rates and other economic data), however as with this financial year, actual results can vary from those

predicted with the accuracy of forecasts only improving once actual student numbers are known. Based on historical underspends and as part of the need to return funding to the Welsh Government reserves for reprioritisation, this budget sees a reduction of £63.5m for 2024-25 (including £9.6m for Post Graduate grants). Despite this reduction there is no impact on financial grant support to eligible Welsh domiciled undergraduate students which remains unchanged. As a result, there is no contingency within this budget and there is a risk of potential overspend if outturn varies from current trends.

***Grants: A table showing the 2022-23 outturn, and forecast expenditure over the following four years (broken down by students studying in Wales and elsewhere in the UK) for: Full-time undergraduate (FTUG) Tuition Fee Grant; Part-time undergraduate (PTUG) Tuition Fee Grant; PTUG Maintenance Grant; Masters Finance grant element; EMA; and Welsh Government Learning Grant (Further Education) (WGLG(FE)).***

2.18.8 This information has been provided for in **Annex H**.

***Loans provision: A table showing the 2022-23 outturn, and forecast loan outlay over the following four years (broken down by students studying in Wales and elsewhere in the UK) for: FTUG tuition fee and maintenance loan outlay and Resource Accounting and Budgeting (RAB) charge, PTUG tuition fee and maintenance loan outlay and RAB charge, Masters Finance loan element and RAB charge, Doctoral loan outlay and RAB charge.***

2.18.9 This information has also been provided at **Annex H**.

## **2.19 Other post-16 education provision**

### ***Details of Personal Learning Account funding***

2.19.1 As a result of the reprioritisation exercise to reserves, Personal Learning Accounts (PLA) funding within the Post-16 Provision (CTER) BEL has reduced by £7.2m for 2024-25. To ensure the FE sector has the maximum flexibility to manage this reduction, officials are proposing that PLA activity is mainstreamed and prioritised within FE part-time provision. Absorbing this level of funding into mainstream part-time to ensure continued delivery in priority areas via PLA will, however, affect and reduce other forms of part-time provision currently delivered across Wales.

### ***Details of the Welsh in Education budget including any allocation for the Coleg Cenedlaethol.***

2.19.2 In 2023-24, the core funding of the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol stands at £7.013m. This includes funding of £5.046m for the Coleg's higher education programme and £0.684m for its Welsh-medium scholarship scheme. In higher education, £4.184m directly supports Welsh-medium provision across universities and subject areas. Essential support is provided through Coleg branches to lecturers, staff development and publications. In post-16, a total of £1.283m has been allocated to support the Further Education and Apprenticeship Welsh-medium Action Plan, which is providing development grants in priority areas including Health and Social Care, Childcare and Public Services.

2.19.3 Within the core funding, the Coleg provides training and mentoring through Sgiliaith, to enable tutors and assessors to gain confidence in teaching bilingually and support for the apprenticeship sector. Additional grant funding from other areas is provided for digital and

other resource development, the ambassador project and support for developing Welsh as a subject and Welsh-medium teachers.

- 2.19.4 The Programme for Government and the Co-operation Agreement includes a commitment to invest in the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol to increase the amount of Welsh-medium delivery in the apprenticeship and further education sector, and the National Centre for Learning Welsh to provide free Welsh language learning for 16 to 25-year-olds. In the budget for 2023-24, an additional £4.5m was allocated as part of the Co-operation Agreement, with £2.825m provided to the Coleg and £1.675 to the National Centre.
- 2.19.5 The additional allocation to the Coleg in 2023-24 is funding a programme of development grants to colleges and apprenticeship providers to develop capacity and provision in priority sectors, including childcare, health and social care, sports and leisure, and agriculture. In addition, the funding is supporting two specific projects to develop the confidence of students who are able to teach through Welsh, and to attract students back to Wales to teach through the medium of Welsh.
- 2.19.6 The Co-operation Agreement funding is being maintained at £4.5m in this budget, with £2.825m provided to the Coleg and £1.675 to the National Centre. Maintaining the budget at 2023-24 levels will enable us to reprioritise the £3.5m originally earmarked for year 3 of the Co-operation Agreement; thereby limiting the impact of budget reductions across Welsh Language BELs.
- 2.19.7 Reprioritising funding in this way will allow us to protect core services that support our ambitions for Cymraeg 2050. In particular, we will be able to maintain funding linked to the Welsh Education Bill, Mudiad Meithrin and the Welsh in Education budget to support Welsh language delivery.
- 2.19.8 However, reprioritising funding may lead to the Coleg having to withdraw from commitments made to FE Colleges and Apprenticeship providers. It may also result in a reduction in the numbers learning Welsh. We will work with the Coleg and the National Centre to explore options to mitigate the impact of this approach and support action to maintain Welsh-medium provision in priority sectors as well the provision of free courses for 16-25 year olds and the education workforce.

#### ***Details of funding for the International Learning Exchange Programme (Taith).***

- 2.19.9 The draft budget allocation for Taith (which also includes funding for the Global Wales programme) for 2024-25 is £6.5m, which is a reduction of £1.6m (19.75%) from 2023-24 allocation of £8.1m. In my [October statement](#), I provided an update on the International Learning Exchange Programme (Taith) outlining governance changes, a new open stakeholder engagement structure, along with a refreshed programme strategy. Combined, these developments provide a robust framework to ensure that the programme has a renewed focus on supporting projects that provide the greatest impact and continues to facilitate innovative and life-changing educational exchanges whilst providing targeted support for individuals with barriers to participation in international exchange.

#### **2.20 Young Person's Guarantee**

##### ***Details of budget provision from the Education and Welsh Language MEG which contributes to the Young Person's Guarantee.***

- 2.20.1 The Young Persons Guarantee is the umbrella structure, which sits above all programmes for young people, aiming to create a simple journey for young people regardless of their circumstances and background.
- 2.20.2 The total quantum of funding intended to be deployed on delivering the Young Persons Guarantee in 2024/25 could reach, given there are some demand-led programmes, circa £1bn across both the Education, Social Justice and Welsh Language and Economy MEGs, but it should also be noted some programmes are available to all-ages and some of the programmes are funded over academic years rather than financial years.
- 2.20.3 A cross- WG official-level Programme Board meets to scrutinise the effective policy direction and allocation of resources – escalating relevant matters to Ministers as appropriate. An external Stakeholder Advisory Group also forms part of the scrutiny and advice process, alongside a newly established Young Person’s Advisory Board.

## **2.21 Capital funding for school and college infrastructure**

### ***Information on budget provision for the Sustainable Communities for Learning programme and progress of the programme to date, including expenditure and numbers of projects completed/approved to date, broken down by Band A and Band B.***

- 2.21.1 The Sustainable Communities for Learning – Band A was designed to improve schools and colleges in poor condition, reduce surplus capacity and improve standards through the provision of an environment that is able to deliver a 21st century curriculum. The first wave of investment started in 2014 and is now complete, with a total Welsh Government funding contribution of £805m, across a total of 178 individual projects with a total investment of £1.61bn including delivery partner contributions.
- 2.21.2 Sustainable Communities for Learning - Band B continues capital investment across the education estate, building new Net Zero Carbon schools and colleges, improving schools and colleges in poor condition, and ensuring sustainable provision of 21st century curriculum environments for learning. It commenced in 2019 and delivery of the programme is well underway with 23 projects complete, 34 under construction, 12 in mobilisation, 36 going through the business case process and 91 in the pipeline. Funding for projects delivered as part of the SCfL Programme is subject to the successful completion of the business case process.
- 2.21.3 The wider SCFL programme is anticipating full budget allocation spend of £314m in 2023-24, after a £40m reduction in budget following the in-year reprioritisation exercise, in readiness for a proposed capital to revenue transfer. Through the SCfL Programme, a total of £971.4m has been invested by Welsh Government since 2019-20.
- 2.21.4 The programme has provided essential funding for delivery partners in policy priority areas including Additional Learning Needs (£40m across 2022-23 -2023-24), Community Hubs Capital Grants (£22m in 2022-23), an ongoing ICT investment programme (£10m in 2022-23 and 2023-24), Universal Primary Free School Meals (£35m in 2022-23) and Welsh Medium Capital Grants (£5.5m in 2022-23).

2.21.5 The budget provision for the SCfL Programme is funded from the Education Infrastructure BEL, with the budget standing at £343.4m for 2024-25. As outlined at paragraph 1.1.6, this includes the £10m reduction as a result of the reprioritisation of funding to reserves.

***An updated assessment of the implications of the increases to energy prices and the cost of living for the Sustainable Communities for Learning programme, including any impact on the progress and costs of projects.***

2.21.6 The Programme has seen significant cost increases over the last three years, in the region of 25% over that period. The consequences of exiting the EU, Covid-19 as well as the increases in energy costs has had a detrimental impact on the Programme and the construction sector as a whole. Whilst the SCfL Programme had secured a healthy budget increase (33% above the 2021/22 Programme baseline budget), to deliver more new schools and colleges, the significant levels of inflation we have witnessed recently have all but wiped this out. The budget increase from 2022/23 has cushioned the impact of inflation meaning that projects which were already in the pipeline could continue to be progressed. However, the medium to long-term effect of inflation means that the ambition to accelerate delivery of new schools and colleges has been impacted. Over time, with inflation remaining moderately high, increased construction costs do mean that the Education Estate in Wales is building and refurbishing less schools and colleges for the same level of funding.

2.21.7 It should be noted that affordability of delivery partner contribution, be it local authority, diocesan authority or college is also becoming increasingly challenging due to these increases.

2.21.8 The Programme delivers energy efficient new-build solutions and is also an enabler for energy efficiency gains through major refurbishment projects - thus reducing the revenue burden for local authorities and further education institutions.

2.21.9 Whilst it is recognised that not all of the Education Estate is touched by the SCfL Programme, officials are putting in place measures to assist local authorities and further education institutions to address this through their existing capital maintenance programmes. Officials have procured a £2m Elemental Building Condition and Energy Assessment Survey for every state funded school and college in Wales which commenced last month. Data from the Surveys will be used to develop a Net Zero Carbon Route Map for each school and college which will, over time, contribute towards more thermally efficient buildings, reduced carbon emissions, lower energy consumption and lower utility costs for schools and colleges.

***The financial implications from the Welsh Government's carbon net zero policies and how this affects the 2024-25 draft budget.***

2.21.10 From 1 January 2022, the SCfL Programme mandated that all projects that had not secured approval at OBC stage are required to be delivered as Net Zero Carbon in Operation with a 20% reduction in embodied carbon; that is the carbon emitted through construction materials and the construction process. The SCfL Programme currently commits to fund 100% of the additional (BREEAM Excellent baseline) cost. This element equates to approximately 12.5% of construction costs.

2.21.11 As noted above, to assist local authorities and further education institutions in working towards the 2030 Net Zero Carbon Public Sector Commitment, the SCfL team have procured an estate-wide building elemental condition and carbon survey.

2.21.12 The programme has commenced and will conclude by March 2025. Upon completion, all state funded schools and colleges will have an elemental building condition and carbon survey along with a route map to Net Zero Carbon. Route Maps will follow the UK Green Buildings Council's 'Fabric first' approach towards achieving Net Zero Carbon buildings i.e. to insulate and reduce energy demand - which includes replacing sub-optimal elemental building components (windows, roofs, heating and lighting systems etc.). The findings from these surveys are likely to highlight the need for additional capital funding in order to meet the WG decarbonisation commitments. However, the Net Zero Carbon Route Maps will provide local authorities and further education institutions with a valuable tool for targeting investment through their capital maintenance programmes towards the areas of work which will offer the greatest saving in energy consumption and revenue utility costs.

2.21.13 I launched the Sustainable Schools Challenge back in September 2022 inviting applications from local authorities that could demonstrate innovative and collaborative design, development, delivery, and management of a primary school that would make a positive contribution to the environment and surrounding landscape. In March 2023 I announced funding for three new sustainable schools – a capital investment of £44.7m for all three projects.

2.21.14 These projects, Ysgol Gynradd Gymraeg Rhosafan, Neath Port Talbot, a new school serving the Glyn-coch community in Rhondda Cynnon Taff and Ysgol Bontnewydd, in Gwynedd will push the boundaries on all aspects of sustainability through innovation and collaboration and provide useful case studies to inform the wider programme. Community and Pupil and community engagement at all stages is a requirement for these projects, linking to the curriculum in innovative ways through digital and physical methods. All three new school projects are planned for completion by September 2025.

## **2.22 Capital funding for childcare**

### ***Information on capital funding from the Education and Welsh Language MEG for the Childcare Offer and Flying Start programme, including the impact of revised eligibility and entitlement.***

2.22.1 The Childcare and Early Years Capital Programme was implemented in October 2022 and is available for the next three years until March 2025 with a total budget allocation of £70m. The programme supports both Flying Start and the Childcare Offer and aims to improve and grow new and existing childcare provisions across Wales. The budget is split into two distinct funding streams: small grants funding and major capital funding. Small grants funding of £10m per annum is available for all CIW registered childcare and play providers which is accessible via their local authority administration process. The small grants element is used to support projects and items up to the value of £20,000 and the ceiling amount is based on the number of CIW childcare places within the provision. A budget of £15m per annum is available for major capital projects for proposals over £20,000 and ranges from small refurbishment works through to the introduction of extensions and standalone buildings for childcare provisions.

## **2.23 Capital funding for the Community Focused Schools initiative**

***Information on budget provision for the Community Hubs and Community Learning Centres grant and an update on progress in increasing the community focused nature of education estates and adapting premises for community use.***

2.23.1 We have reviewed the investment impact of the 2022-23 £20m capital for Community Focused Schools grant through a series of workshops with local authority stakeholders which has been used to inform future waves of investment. This collaborative approach has enabled officials to develop a more strategic investment programme of £40m capital funding over the current and next financial years to continue supporting schools to adjust their premises to facilitate wider community use.

2.23.2 In order to ensure that funding was targeted both strategically and geographically, for the greatest impact, funding was subdivided between those projects of less than £0.5m and those over £0.5m. Earlier this year I approved support for those projects of £0.5m or below, with funding totalling £28.2m, which will be delivered over the next two years. Projects over £0.5m are subject to a case-by-case business case approval and budget availability.

**Summary**

The Education and Welsh Language MEG Draft Budget for 2024-25 is presented to the Committee for consideration.

**Jeremy Miles MS**  
**Minister for Education and Welsh Language**



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ANNEX A - EWL MEG breakdown by Action and BEL for 2024-25, 2023-24 forecast outturn and 2022-23 final outturns

Resource

Action	BEL Description	2022-23 Final Outturn	2023-24 Final Budget (Feb 2023)	2023-24 1st Supplementary Budget (June 2023)	2023-24 Forecast Outturn (Period 7)	2024-25 Indicative (Final Budget 2023-24 - Feb 2023)	2024-25 Reprioritised Funding	2024-24 Grant Amalgamation	2024-25 Other Changes	2024-25 Draft Budget (Dec 2023)
		£000s								
Literacy and Numeracy	Literacy & Numeracy	5,148	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Literacy and Numeracy</b>		<b>5,148</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Curriculum	Curriculum & Assessment	13,971	36,464	36,854	36,680	32,624	-2,400	-16,246	462	14,440
	Curriculum Reform	18,193	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Curriculum</b>		<b>32,164</b>	<b>36,464</b>	<b>36,854</b>	<b>36,680</b>	<b>32,624</b>	<b>-2,400</b>	<b>-16,246</b>	<b>462</b>	<b>14,440</b>
Teaching and Leadership	Teacher Development and Support	87,642	54,234	75,825	74,704	56,234	-2,306	-23,945	0	29,983
	Teacher Development and Support - Non-Cash	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	400	400
<b>Total Teaching and Leadership</b>		<b>87,642</b>	<b>54,234</b>	<b>75,825</b>	<b>74,704</b>	<b>56,234</b>	<b>-2,306</b>	<b>-23,945</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>30,383</b>
Pre-16 Education LA Support	Education Reform (LAEG)	0	0	0	0	0	0	54,353	0	54,353
	School Standards (LAEG)	0	0	0	0	0	0	159,885	0	159,885
	Equity in Education (LAEG)	0	0	0	0	0	0	155,000	0	155,000
	Cymraeg 2050 (LAEG)	0	0	0	0	0	0	9,770	0	9,770
<b>Total Pre-16 Education LA Support</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>379,008</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>379,008</b>
Qualifications	Qualifications Wales	9,177	10,007	9,928	10,018	10,007	0	0	0	10,007
	Qualifications Wales - Non-Cash	298	250	344	344	250	0	0	0	250
<b>Total Qualifications</b>		<b>9,475</b>	<b>10,257</b>	<b>10,272</b>	<b>10,362</b>	<b>10,257</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10,257</b>
Post-16 Education	Post -16 Provision (CTER)	579,045	576,013	583,951	575,353	578,813	-12,928	0	0	565,885
	International Learning Exchange Programme	6,847	8,100	8,100	11,100	8,100	-1,600	0	0	6,500

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Action	BEL Description	2022-23 Final Outturn	2023-24 Final Budget (Feb 2023)	2023-24 1st Supplementary Budget (June 2023)	2023-24 Forecast Outturn (Period 7)	2024-25 Indicative (Final Budget 2023-24 - Feb 2023)	2024-25 Reprioritised Funding	2024-24 Grant Amalgamation	2024-25 Other Changes	2024-25 Draft Budget (Dec 2023)
		£000s								
	PCET Reform Commission for Tertiary Education and Research (CTER)	1,603	6,000	6,000	4,800	6,000	0	0	0	6,000
	PCET Reform – Non-Cash Commission for Tertiary Education and Research (CTER) - Non Cash	0	650	650	302	650	0	0	78	728
<b>Total Post-16 Education</b>		<b>587,495</b>	<b>590,763</b>	<b>598,701</b>	<b>591,555</b>	<b>593,563</b>	<b>-14,528</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>579,113</b>
Higher Education	HEFCW-Programme Expenditure (CTER)	209,094	198,556	205,230	203,908	198,556	-11,000	0	0	187,556
	HEFCW-Programme Expenditure - Non-Cash	41	100	100	100	100	0	0	0	100
<b>Total Higher Education</b>		<b>209,135</b>	<b>198,656</b>	<b>205,330</b>	<b>204,008</b>	<b>198,656</b>	<b>-11,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>187,656</b>
Education Standards	School Improvement Grant	171,733	168,659	168,197	165,614	159,659	0	-159,197	-462	0
	Raising School Standards	-1,171	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	School Standards Support	1,377	2,396	2,468	3,210	3,126	0	0	0	3,126
<b>Total Education Standards</b>		<b>171,939</b>	<b>171,055</b>	<b>170,665</b>	<b>168,824</b>	<b>162,785</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-159,197</b>	<b>-462</b>	<b>3,126</b>
Tackling Barriers to Attainment	Tackling Barriers to Attainment	149,505	142,480	142,480	142,270	142,480	-500	-127,825	-270	13,885
<b>Total Tackling Barriers to Attainment</b>		<b>149,505</b>	<b>142,480</b>	<b>142,480</b>	<b>142,270</b>	<b>142,480</b>	<b>-500</b>	<b>-127,825</b>	<b>-270</b>	<b>13,885</b>
ICT & Information Management Systems	Supporting Digital Learning in Education	3,743	3,929	3,929	3,874	3,929	0	0	0	3,929
	Supporting Digital Learning in Education - Non-Cash	2,487	2,488	2,488	2,488	2,488	0	0	0	2,488
<b>Total ICT &amp; Information Management Systems</b>		<b>6,230</b>	<b>6,417</b>	<b>6,417</b>	<b>6,362</b>	<b>6,417</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6,417</b>
Wellbeing of children and young people	Additional Learning Needs	18,999	25,591	24,484	24,381	25,591	0	-22,000	0	3,591
	Food & Nutrition in Schools	58,277	78,915	78,915	74,662	98,915	-1,000	0	3,500	101,415
	Post 16 Specialist Placements	14,019	13,881	13,881	14,804	13,881	0	0	0	13,881
	Whole School Approach to Wellbeing	4,253	5,400	5,400	4,113	6,600	0	-4,750	0	1,850

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		£000s								
	Vulnerable Groups	672	1,150	1,150	841	1,150	0	-500	270	920
<b>Total Wellbeing of children and young people</b>		<b>96,220</b>	<b>124,937</b>	<b>123,830</b>	<b>118,801</b>	<b>146,137</b>	<b>-1,000</b>	<b>-27,250</b>	<b>3,770</b>	<b>121,657</b>
Post-16 learner support	Student Support Grants	310,426	346,895	346,895	295,803	345,895	-63,533	0	0	282,362
	SLC/HMRC Administration Costs	21,468	14,643	14,643	19,750	18,143	0	0	0	18,143
	Student Loans Resource Budget Provision	-165,355	488,010	488,010	488,010	514,341	0	0	0	514,341
	Targeted Student Support Awards	-316	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Post-16 learner support</b>		<b>166,223</b>	<b>849,548</b>	<b>849,548</b>	<b>803,563</b>	<b>878,379</b>	<b>-63,533</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>814,846</b>
Pupil Engagement	Tackling Disaffection	5,963	7,905	5,381	5,006	7,905	0	-4,200	0	3,705
	Community Schools	1,129	5,100	7,600	7,646	15,920	0	-15,545	0	375
<b>Total Pupil Engagement</b>		<b>7,092</b>	<b>13,005</b>	<b>12,981</b>	<b>12,652</b>	<b>23,825</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-19,745</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4,080</b>
Youth Engagement & Employment	Offender Learning	7,303	7,328	7,328	7,328	7,328	0	0	0	7,328
	Youth Engagement & Employment	12,181	11,956	15,656	14,619	12,376	-1,000	0	0	11,376
<b>Total Youth Engagement &amp; Employment</b>		<b>19,484</b>	<b>19,284</b>	<b>22,984</b>	<b>21,947</b>	<b>19,704</b>	<b>-1,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>18,704</b>
Delivery Support	Education Communications	378	413	413	482	413	0	0	0	413
	International Education Programme	591	574	574	542	574	-50	0	0	524
<b>Total Delivery Support</b>		<b>969</b>	<b>987</b>	<b>987</b>	<b>1,024</b>	<b>987</b>	<b>-50</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>937</b>
Welsh in Education	Welsh in Education	17,713	20,775	19,030	18,830	24,275	-3,500	-2,200	-1,675	16,900
<b>Total Welsh in Education</b>		<b>17,713</b>	<b>20,775</b>	<b>19,030</b>	<b>18,830</b>	<b>24,275</b>	<b>-3,500</b>	<b>-2,200</b>	<b>-1,675</b>	<b>16,900</b>
Welsh Language	Welsh Language	23,716	22,404	24,149	26,236	22,404	0	-500	1,675	23,579
	Welsh Language Commissioner	3,101	3,357	3,282	3,282	3,357	-168	0	0	3,189
	Welsh Language Commissioner - Non-Cash	165	169	245	245	121	0	0	0	121
<b>Total Welsh Language</b>		<b>26,982</b>	<b>25,930</b>	<b>27,676</b>	<b>29,763</b>	<b>25,882</b>	<b>-168</b>	<b>-500</b>	<b>1,675</b>	<b>26,889</b>

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		£000s								
Estate & IT Provision	Education Infrastructure	2,206	5,000	5,000	2,259	10,000	-3,000	-2,100	4,000	8,900
Total Estate & IT Provision		2,206	5,000	5,000	2,259	10,000	-3,000	-2,100	4,000	8,900
EDUCATION - TOTAL RESOURCE BUDGET		1,595,622	2,269,792	2,308,580	2,243,604	2,332,205	-102,985	0	7,978	2,237,198

Capital

Action	BEL Description	2022-23 Final Outturn	2023-24 Final Budget (Feb 2023)	2023-24 1st Supplementary Budget (June 2023)	2023-24 Forecast Outturn (Period 7)	2024-25 Indicative (Final Budget 2023-24 - Feb 2023)	2024-25 Reprioritised Funding	2024-25 Other Changes	2024-25 Draft Budget (Dec 2023)
		£000s							
Estate & IT Provision	Education Infrastructure	347,181	354,400	354,400	310,480	353,400	-10,000	0	343,400
Total Estate & IT Provision		347,181	354,400	354,400	310,480	353,400	-10,000	0	343,400
Post-16 Learner Support	SLC/HMRC Administration Costs	3,748	2,500	2,500	5,267	2,500	0	0	2,500
Total Post-16 learner support		3,748	2,500	2,500	5,267	2,500	0	0	2,500
Higher Education	HEFCW-Programme Expenditure	6	100	100	100	100	0	0	100
Total Higher Education		6	100	100	100	100	0	0	100
Post-16 Education	Post -16 Provision	-2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Post Compulsory Educ.& Training Reform	0	0	0	2,385		0	0	0
Total Post-16 Education		-2	0	0	2,385	0	0	0	0
Qualifications	Qualifications Wales	275	250	250	250	250	0	0	250
Total Qualifications		275	250	250	250	250	0	0	250
Welsh Language	Welsh Language Commissioner	242	50	50	50	50	0	0	50
Total Welsh Language		242	50	50	50	50	0	0	50

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<b>EDUCATION - TOTAL GENERAL CAPITAL BUDGET</b>		<b>351,450</b>	<b>357,300</b>	<b>357,300</b>	<b>318,532</b>	<b>356,300</b>	<b>-10,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>346,300</b>
<b>Estate &amp; IT Provision</b>	Education Infrastructure - FT	3,178	15,557	15,557	20,000	0	0	2,788	2,788
	Education Infrastructure - Repayment	-657	-671	-671	-671	-686	0	0	-686
<b>Total Estate &amp; IT Provision</b>		<b>2,521</b>	<b>14,886</b>	<b>14,886</b>	<b>19,329</b>	<b>-686</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,788</b>	<b>2,102</b>
<b>EDUCATION - TOTAL FT CAPITAL BUDGET</b>		<b>2,521</b>	<b>14,886</b>	<b>14,886</b>	<b>19,329</b>	<b>-686</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,788</b>	<b>2,102</b>
<b>EDUCATION - TOTAL CAPITAL BUDGET</b>		<b>353,971</b>	<b>372,186</b>	<b>372,186</b>	<b>337,861</b>	<b>355,614</b>	<b>-10,000</b>	<b>2,788</b>	<b>348,402</b>

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## **ANNEX B - Action level commentary within the MEG**

### **Resource**

#### ***Curriculum Action***

##### **Curriculum & Assessment BEL (See Section 2.5 of Evidence Paper)**

- The Curriculum & Assessment BEL covers a broad range of activity spanning the previous curriculum and now the Curriculum for Wales, including initiatives supporting delivery of STEM subjects, the Arts and Music, Foundation Learning, international languages, Literacy & Numeracy, and also funding to support developments in terms of assessment.
- There has been a net decrease in the Curriculum & Assessment BEL of £18.2m in 2024-25 comprising:
  - £2.4m reduction as part of the reprioritisation exercise. These reductions in funding have been achieved by limiting planned activity in relation to Modern foreign Languages (£0.1m), Early Learning (£0.06m) and Curriculum Reform (£1.61m), and reducing funding for Techniquest & Xplore! (£0.13m) and the National Music Service (£0.5m);
  - £16.246m has been transferred to the new consolidated grants as part of the grant amalgamation exercise:
    - £10.978m for the Curriculum Reform Schools Grant to the Education Reform (LAEG) BEL; and
    - £5.268m for the Foundation Nursery Grant to the School Standards (LAEG) BEL.
  - £0.462m BEL to BEL transfer from the School Improvement Grant BEL for Regional Consortia Support for Languages.

#### ***Teaching and Leadership Action (See Section 2.4 of Evidence Paper)***

##### **Teacher Development & Support BEL**

- There has been a net decrease in the Teacher development Support BEL of £25.851m in 2024-25 comprising:
  - £0.4m non-cash allocation from reserves for amortisation of intangible fixed assets relating to database development and depreciation of IT equipment relating to the Education Workforce Council;
  - £2.306m reduction as part of the reprioritisation exercise including reductions in funding to the EWC (£1.2m), Masters in Education (£0.3m), Employment Based ITE (£0.5m) and demand led ITE incentives (£0.306m);

- £23.945m has been transferred to the new consolidated grants as part of the grant amalgamation exercise:
  - £2.570m for Welsh Language Professional Learning to the Cymraeg 2050 (LAEG) BEL; and
  - £21.375m Professional Learning & Education Leadership funding to the Education Reform (LAEG) BEL.

***Pre-16 Education LA Support Action (See Section 1.3 and 2.1 of Evidence Paper)***

In order to provide local authorities and schools with more flexibility to respond to the significant challenges they face in areas such as attendance, behaviour, standards and pupil wellbeing grants have been amalgamated into the Local Authority Education Grant (LAEG) with four strands.

**Education Reform (LAEG) BEL**

- Funding totalling £54.353m has been transferred into the new consolidated grant comprising:
  - £10.978m for the Curriculum Reform Schools Grant from the Curriculum & Assessment BEL;
  - £21.375m Professional Learning & Education Leadership funding from the Teacher Development & Support BEL; and
  - £22m for ALN Implementation & Provision Grants from the Additional Learning Needs BEL.

**School Standards Grant (LAEG) BEL**

- Funding totalling £159.885m has been transferred into the new consolidated grant comprising:
  - £5.268m for the Foundation Phase Nursery Grant from the Curriculum & Assessment BEL;
  - £115.197m for the Education Improvement Grant from the School Improvement Grant BEL;
  - £28.5m for the Recruit, Recover & Raise Standards (RRRS) Programme from the School Improvement Grant BEL;
  - £0.5m through the reprioritisation of funding to support the new grant from the Virtual Schools BEL;
  - £8.32m through the reprioritisation of funding to support the new grant from the Community Schools BEL; and
  - £2.1m through the reprioritisation of funding to support the new grant from the Education Infrastructure BEL.

**Equity in Education Grant (LAEG) BEL**

- Funding totalling £155m has been transferred into the new consolidated grant comprising:
  - £11m for the Minority Ethnic Gypsy Roma Travellers (MEGRT) Grant from the School Improvement Grant BEL;

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- £127.825m for the Pupil Development Grant from the Tackling Barriers to Attainment BEL;
- £3.55m for school based counselling funding and £1.2m planned rise from the Whole School Approach to Wellbeing BEL;
- £1.7m for Home Education funding from the Tackling Disaffection BEL;
- £2.5m for Education Welfare Officer funding from the Tackling Disaffection BEL;
- £6.532m for Family Engagement Officer funding from the Community Schools BEL; and
- £0.693m for a Community Focussed Schools Manager post from the Community Schools BEL.

#### Cymraeg 2050 Grant (LAEG) BEL

- Funding totalling £9.77m has been transferred into the new consolidated grant comprising:
  - £2.57m for Welsh Language Professional Learning from the Teacher Development & Support BEL;
  - £4.5m for the Welsh in Education Grant from the School Improvement Grant BEL;
  - £0.5m of Siarter Iaith funding from the Welsh Language BEL; and
  - £2.2m of Immersion funding from the Welsh in Education BEL.

#### ***Qualifications Action (See Section 2.12 of Evidence Paper)***

#### Qualifications Wales BEL

- To provide grant in aid to Qualifications Wales (QW), an arm's length body and independent regulator for non-degree qualifications in Wales. Established in 2015 by the Qualifications Wales Act, QW is 100% funded by the Welsh Government.
- The Qualifications Wales budget was increased by £0.39m in 2023-24 and is maintained in 2024-25 following the allocation from Reserves to provide an uplift for pay. Both the non-cash and capital budgets are being maintained at 2023-24 levels.

#### ***Post-16 Education Action***

- This Action includes funding for provision of AS, A levels and wide range of vocational programmes to 16-19 year olds in Local Authority Sixth forms and FE colleges. It also provides adult part time provision (primarily provision of Basic Skills and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), in FE Colleges and Local Authority Community Learning venues. The action also supports strategic projects and quality improvement activities designed to improve the delivery of post 16 learning in Wales including support for quality improvement, capacity building and research for the learning and skills sector, The Learning and Work



Institute grant funding (including Adult Learners Week), Personal Learning Accounts, developing Careers policy, funding to support the delivery of the Seren network, supporting progression to Sutton Trust universities for the brightest learners; and the International Learning Programme - Taith activities to support international mobility for staff and students. This action also supports costs related to PCET reform in establishing the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research. There is also a non-cash depreciation budget to support the IT investment in the new organisation.

2.23.3 In this Budget, there is decrease of £14.528m in 2024-25 taking the budget to £579.113m.

**Post-16 provision (CTER) BEL (See Sections 2.17 and 2.19 of Evidence Paper)**

2.23.4 Reductions totalling £12.928m have been identified as part of the reprioritisation exercise. Reductions have been achieved in the following areas:

- £2m potential reclaim against part time provision targets;
- £1.845m for Complex Needs training and the Knowledge Transfer Programme;
- £1.045m reduction to fit the current needs profiles for the Period Dignity (£0.345m), FE Junior Apprenticeships (£0.1m) and Adult Learning Review (£0.6m) budgets;
- £0.838m reduction to the Seren budget; and
- £7.2m through the removal of the Personal Learning Accounts budget by mainstreaming into part time provision.

**International Learning Exchange Programme BEL (See Section 2.19 of Evidence Paper)**

2.23.5 The budget for Taith & Global Wales decreases by £1.6m in 2024-25 as part of the reprioritisation exercise.

**Commission for Tertiary Education and Research (CTER) BEL (See Section 2.8 of Evidence Paper)**

- £78k is allocated from reserves to meet the non cash requirements of the new arms-length body. The revenue budget is maintained at £6m.
- Further transfers are anticipated in a future budget to transfer further education and higher education budgets to CTER.

**Higher Education Action (See Section 2.18 of Evidence Paper)**

- This budget contains Grant in Aid funding for HEFCW to deliver the Welsh Government priorities as set out in the Annual Remit letter. HEFCW is also a key partner in taking forward work to establish the Commission for Tertiary Education and Research for Wales. It also includes HEFCW's non-cash allocation. Funding will transfer to CTER in a future budget.

**HEFCW – Programme Expenditure (CTER) BEL**

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- There is a decrease in the budget of £11m in 2024-25 reflecting reductions as a result of the reprioritisation exercise comprising:
  - £3.2m through the removal of post graduate bursaries; and
  - £7.8m reduction to HEFCW's (CTER's) non-ringfenced budget.
- The non-cash allocation to support capital investment is maintained at £0.1m in 2024-25.

***Education Standards Action***

**School Improvement Grant BEL (See Sections 2.2 and 2.9 of Evidence Paper)**

- This BEL provides funding for the Education Improvement Grant (EIG), including Foundation Phase delivery, via the Regional Consortia School Improvement Grant (RCSIG); grant funding to local authorities for ethnic minority and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller learners; and funding for the Recruit, Recover and Raise Standards (RRRS) in schools.
- In 2024-25 pre-16 education grants will be amalgamated and funding from this BEL will be moved to new BELs for the consolidated grants as follows:
  - £11m for the Minority Ethnic Gypsy Roma Travellers (MEGRT) grant to the Equity in Education (LAEG) BEL;
  - £4.5m for the Welsh in Education Grant to the Cymraeg 2050 (LAEG) BEL; and
  - £115.197m for the Education Improvement Grant and £28.5m for the Recruit, Recover & Raise Standards (RRRS) programme to the School Standards (LAEG) BEL.
- £0.462m BEL to BEL transfer for Regional Consortia Support for Languages to the Curriculum and Assessment BEL.

**School Standards Support BEL (See Section 2.11 of Evidence Paper)**

- This budget funds systems to enable the statutory collection and reporting of data on schools, learners and the workforce, which provide evidence for high profile policy activity, research and statistics. The funding has a direct link to evidencing and demonstrating improvements in standards and tackling the attainment gap. The budget also supports participation of Wales in PISA. In previous year's this budget has provided additional funding for Estyn.
- The budget remains at £3.126m for 2024-25.

***Tackling Barriers to Attainment Action***

**Tackling Barriers to Attainment BEL (See Section 2.3 of Evidence Paper)**

- The budget for the Tackling Barriers to Attainment BEL decreases by £128.595m in 2024-25 comprising:
  - £0.5m reduction as part of the reprioritisation exercise from the demand led School Essentials Grant, based on reduced eFSM numbers in the revised PLASC 2023 data. There will be no change to overall funding being provided to eligible pupils (£125 per learner or £200 for those entering year 7);
  - £127.825m for the Pupil Development Grant being transferred to the new consolidated Equity in Education (LAEG) BEL as part of the grant amalgamation exercise; and
  - £0.27m BEL to BEL transfer of funding for Service Children to the Vulnerable Groups BEL.

***ICT and Information Management Systems Action***

**Supporting Digital Learning in Education BEL**

- This funding supports the delivery of the Hwb Programme which provides maintained schools in Wales with access to a wide range of digital learning tools and services which aim to inspire our teachers and learners to confidently embed digital practices, while developing their culture, competencies, skills and knowledge underpinning the curriculum for Wales.
- Funding for Supporting Digital Learning in Education is being maintained at £6.417m in 2024-25. This is made up of £3.929m near cash and £2.488m non cash.

***Wellbeing of Children and Young People Action***

**Additional Learning Needs BEL (See Section 2.10 of Evidence Paper)**

- £22m for ALN Implementation & Provision Grants has been transferred to the new consolidated Education Reforms (LAEG) BEL as part of the grant amalgamation exercise.

**Food & Nutrition in Schools BEL (See Section 2.3 of Evidence Paper)**

- The Food and Nutrition in Schools BEL funds a number of programmes including the School Holiday Enrichment Programme (SHEP) and the provision of the free School Milk scheme in the Foundation phase and at Key Stage 2 at a subsidised rate. In addition, it also funds the maintenance and improvements needed to the FSM Eligibility Checking System.
- There is a net increase of £2.5m for Food & Nutrition in Schools comprising:
  - £3.5m allocation from reserves due to the reprofiling of Co-operation Agreement funding for Universal Primary Free School Meal provision; and

- £1m reduction as part of the reprioritisation exercise, with £0.2m reduction to the demand led School Milk budget based on current take-up levels (savings will have no impact on children accessing free (KS1) or subsidised milk (KS2)) and £0.8m relating to the Year 7 breakfast pilot which ended in July 2023.

**Post 16 Specialist Placements BEL (See Section 2.10 of Evidence Paper)**

- The budget provides funding for specialist college placements for learners up to age 25 who require specialist provision in order to access FE suitable to meet their needs. The funding is statutory (not discretionary) and demand led, being allocated on an individual basis according to assessed education and training needs in accordance with Welsh Ministers duties under Section 41 of the Learning and Skills Act. Specialist FE provision is essential in ensuring that those disabled young people whose needs cannot be met in their local college are able to access further education and training suitable to their needs.
- Funding for the Post-16 Specialist placements BEL is being maintained at £13.881m in 2024-25.

**Whole School Approach to Wellbeing BEL (See Section 2.6 of Evidence Paper)**

- Funding is provided to support a whole school approach (WSA) to mental health. Draft Budget 2022-23 included extra funding for mental health, including funding to extend counselling provision and rollout of CAMHS in-reach in schools.
- Whole School Approach to Wellbeing BEL reduces by £4.75m in 2024-25 in relation to local authority funding transferring to the new amalgamated LAEG.

**Vulnerable Groups BEL (See Section 2.3 of Evidence Paper)**

- Funding includes the Virtual Schools Grant, anti-racism work, transgender guidance (potential legal fees) and the joint funding with Health and Social Services of the Fostering and Wellbeing Programme.
- Net reduction of £0.23m comprised of:
  - a transfer of £0.5m funding to the new amalgamated LAEG; and
  - an increase of £0.27m due to a BEL to BEL transfer of funding for Service Children from the Tackling Barriers to Attainment BEL.

***Post-16 Learner Support Action***

- This Action includes funding for the demand led statutory student support programme accounts for Higher Education (HE) and Further Education (FE). The budget supports Part-Time Grants and Fees, Student Loan Company (SLC) Targeted Grants, Student Support Grants, Tuition Fee Grant and the Education Maintenance Allowance. It also provides the administration fee that is paid to the student loans company, the HMRC administration fee, the Open University's administration of statutory student support for historic student cohorts and policy & implementation along with the non-cash provision for student loans.

**Student Support Grants BEL (See Section 2.18 of Evidence Paper)**

- The budget has been reduced by a total of £63.533m in 2024-25 through removal of Post Graduate Grants (£9.6m) and a reduction to the HE Support Grants budget (£53.933m). As student support budgets are demand led they fluctuate according to demographics and uptake of HE. On the basis of historic underspends, the budget has been reprioritised.

**SLC/HMRC Administration Costs BEL**

- The budget is maintained at the published level of £18.143m in 2024-25.

**Student Loans Resource Budget Provision BEL**

- The budget is maintained at the published level £514.341m in 2024-25.

***Pupil Engagement Action***

**Tackling Disaffection BEL (See Section 2.7 of Evidence Paper)**

- Funding supports activities aimed at improving outcomes for vulnerable/disadvantaged learners through: improving anti-bullying and attendance in school; Hay festival (schools and learners programmes); Educated other than at school (EOTAS), counselling; Home education; attendance; anti-bullying.
- The Tackling Disaffection BEL reduces by £4.2m in 2024-25 due to Home Education funding (£1.7m) and Education Welfare Officers funding (£2.5m) transferring to the new consolidated Equity in Education (LAEG) BEL as part of the grant amalgamation exercise.

**Community Schools BEL (See Section 2.3 of Evidence Paper)**

- Funding supports the Programme for Government (PfG) commitment to “explore reform of the school day and the school year” in order to address disadvantage, narrow educational inequalities, support learner and staff well-being and bring them more in line with contemporary patterns of family life and employment.
- The Community Schools BEL reduces by £15.545m in 2024-25 with funding transferring to the new consolidated LAEG:
  - £7.225m to the Equity in Education (LAEG) BEL for Family Engagement Officer funding (£6.532m) and Community Focused School Manager funding (£0.693m); and
  - £8.32m reprioritisation of funding relating to planned rise in BEL to the School Standards (LAEG) BEL.

***Youth Engagement and Employment Action***

**Offender Learning BEL (See Section 2.16 of Evidence Paper)**

- Funding is provided to Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) to support the provision of prisoner learning and skills in adult prisons. Funding is also available for innovative pilot projects which support the Offender Learning agenda, and to support essential skills delivery for those serving sentences in the community. The Welsh Government has a statutory obligation to provide funding for education in adult prisons in Wales.
- Funding for the Offender Learning BEL is being maintained at £7.328m in 2024-25.

**Youth Engagement & Employment BEL (See Section 2.15 of Evidence Paper)**

- This funding supports activities aimed at improving outcomes for young people (aged 11 to 25), supporting their personal, social, and emotional development whilst driving equality and diversity, as well as their continuing engagement with education, employment and training. In addition, the intention is for youth work and youth engagement and progression activity to contribute towards wider government agendas, including mental health and wellbeing, and youth homelessness.
- The budget will reduce by £1m in 2024-25 due to the reprioritisation exercise. Reductions will be achieved by slowing progress on supporting the implementation of the interim Youth Work Board recommendations.

***Delivery Support Action***

**Education Communications BEL**

- Funding is allocated to deliver communication activities in relation to education.
- The budget is maintained at £0.413m in 2024-25.

**International Education Programme BEL**

- The budget supports the International Education Programme, including grants to the British Council (including the Welsh Language Patagonia project) and the Holocaust Educational Trust.
- Funding for the British Council Grant within this BEL will reduce by £0.05m as part of the reprioritisation exercise.

***Welsh in Education Action (See Sections 2.13 and 2.19 of Evidence Paper)***

Welsh in Education BEL

- The Welsh in Education BEL supports activities relating to the educational elements of Cymraeg 2050:
  - Funding for Mudiad Meithrin to increase Welsh-medium childcare provision as a pathway into Welsh-medium education;
  - The planning of Welsh-medium education and implementation of the new 10 year Welsh in Education Strategic Plans (WESPs);
  - Commissioning of teaching and learning resources; and
  - Funding for the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol and the development of post-16 Welsh-medium provision.
- The Welsh in Education BEL will reduce by £7.375m in 2024-25 comprised of:
  - £3.5m reduction as part of the reprioritisation exercise through freezing the Co-operation Agreement budget for the Coleg Cymraeg and National Centre for Learning Welsh at 2023-24 levels;
  - a transfer of £2.2m for Immersion grant to the new consolidated Cymraeg 2050 (LAEG) BEL; and
  - a BEL to BEL transfer of £1.675m to the Welsh Language BEL for funding allocated via the Co-operation Agreement for the National Centre for Learning Welsh.

***Welsh Language Action (See Section 2.13 of Evidence Paper)***

Welsh Language BEL

- The Welsh Language BEL supports the implementation of the current Welsh Government's strategy for the Welsh language: *Cymraeg 2050*. The activities detailed in the Strategy are implemented in partnership with across the Welsh Government and external stakeholders.
- There is a net increase of £1.175m in 2024-25 comprised of:
  - a £0.5m transfer for Siarter Iaith to the new consolidated Cymraeg 2050 (LAEG) BEL; and
  - a £1.675m BEL to BEL transfer from the Welsh in Education BEL for funding allocated via the Co-operation agreement for the National Centre for Learning Welsh.

Welsh Language Commissioner (WLC) BEL

- This BEL funds the WLC including costs for staff, accommodation, legal and professional costs, training and recruitment, and IT to support the work of the WLC in a wide range of functions and powers.
- The Welsh Language Commissioner budget has decreased by £0.168m in 2024-25 following the reprioritisation exercise. A 5% reduction has been applied in line with other Commissioners in the Social Justice MEG.

### ***Estates and IT Provision Action***

#### Education Infrastructure BEL

- This BEL provides the revenue funding required to support the Sustainable Communities for Learning (SCfL) Programme.
- This budget is allocated to support revenue costs associated with the wider delivery of the programme, including Net Zero Carbon survey and Welsh-medium schools grant.
- There has been a net decrease to the BEL of £1.1m in 2024-25 comprised of:
  - a £3m reduction as part of the reprioritisation exercise with reductions in funding based on existing commitments linked to net zero carbon and Welsh Medium Schools Programme;
  - a £4m allocation from reserves for the Education Mutual Investment Model (MIM) Annual Service Charges; and
  - a £2.1m transfer of reprioritised funding to support the new consolidated School Standards (LAEG) BEL as part of the grant amalgamation exercise.

### **Capital (See Sections 2.21 to 2.23 of Evidence Paper)**

#### ***Estates and IT Provision Action***

#### Education Infrastructure BEL

- The BEL supports the SCfL Programme, which is a long term strategic investment in our education infrastructure in Wales, developed in partnership between the Welsh Government and major education stakeholders (local authorities, further education institutions and Catholic and Church in Wales Dioceses). As well as the capital funding of the main programme, the budget also supports various other grant funded schemes to deliver our education priorities, including Community Focussed Schools, Welsh Medium, Childcare, and the EdTech programme. The budget also supports capital funding for Higher Education (HE) maintenance and funding for Higher Education Research Capital



(HERC), which is match funded by the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT).

- There will be a net decrease to the budget in 2024-25 comprised of:
  - a £10m transfer to reserves as part of the reprioritisation exercise to provide scope for a capital to revenue switch in 2024-25; and
  - a £2.788 allocation from reserves for the Education MIM Project Co. loans via DBW - Bridgend County Borough Council (2 Primaries) and Cardiff and Vale College (Vale campuses).

### ***Post-16 Learner Support Action***

#### SLC/HMRC Administration Costs BEL

- The budget is maintained at £2.5m in 2023-24 for Student Loans Company capital requirements.

### ***Higher Education Action***

#### HEFCW Programme Expenditure (CTER) BEL

- The budget is maintained at £0.1m per annum for HEFCW's (to be CTER's capital requirements. Funding will transfer to CTER in a future budget.

### ***Qualifications Action***

#### Qualifications Wales BEL

3. The budget is maintained at £0.25m per annum for Qualification Wales capital requirements.

### ***Welsh Language Action***

#### Welsh Language Commissioner BEL

- The budget is maintained at £0.05m per annum for the Welsh Language Commissioner capital requirements.

**ANNEX C – 2024-25 LOCAL AUTHORITY EDUCATION GRANT (LAEG) GRANT AMALGAMATION – SUMMARY OF TRANSFERS**

BEL Transferred From	Description	2023-24 Position £000	2024-25 Planned £000	Changes £000	2024-25 Revised Grant £000
Curriculum & Assessment	Curriculum Reform Schools	14,779	10,978	0	10,978
Teacher Development & Support	Professional Learning & Education Leadership	21,448	21,375	0	21,375
Additional Learning Needs	ALN Implementation & Provision	21,100	21,100	900	22,000
<b>Total Education Reform (LAEG)</b>		<b>57,327</b>	<b>53,453</b>	<b>900</b>	<b>54,353</b>
Curriculum & Assessment	Foundation Phase Nursery	5,268	5,268	0	5,268
School Improvement Grant	Education Improvement	115,197	115,197	0	115,197
School Improvement Grant	Recruit Recover and Raise Standards	37,500	28,500	0	28,500
Virtual Schools	Reprioritisation of Funding	0	0	500	500
Community Schools	Reprioritisation of Funding	0	0	8,320	8,320
Education Infrastructure	Reprioritisation of Funding	0	0	2,100	2,100
<b>Total School Standards (LAEG)</b>		<b>157,965</b>	<b>148,965</b>	<b>10,920</b>	<b>159,885</b>
School Improvement Grant	MEGRT	11,000	11,000	0	11,000
Tackling Barriers to Attainment	Pupil Development	127,731	127,825	0	127,825
Whole School Approach to Wellbeing	School Based Counselling	3,550	4,750	0	4,750
Virtual Schools	Vulnerable Groups	240	0	0	0
Tackling Disaffection	Home Education	1,700	1,700	0	1,700
Tackling Disaffection	Education Welfare Officers	2,500	2,500	0	2,500
Community Schools	Family Engagement Officers	6,532	6,532	0	6,532
Community Schools	Community Focussed Schools Managers	693	693	0	693
<b>Total Equity in Education (LAEG)</b>		<b>153,946</b>	<b>155,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>155,000</b>
Teacher Development & Support	Welsh Language Professional Learning	2,570	2,570	0	2,570
School Improvement Grant	Welsh in Education	4,500	4,500	0	4,500
Welsh Language	Siarter Iaith	500	500	0	500
Welsh in Education	Immersion	2,200	2,200	0	2,200
<b>Total Cymraeg 2050 Grant (LAEG)</b>		<b>9,770</b>	<b>9,770</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9,770</b>
<b>Total Grants to LA's</b>		<b>379,008</b>	<b>367,188</b>	<b>11,820</b>	<b>379,008</b>

**ANNEX D – Transfers anticipated for the EWL MEG in the Second Supplementary Budget 2023-24**

In addition to the transfer to reserves of £74.7m revenue and £40m capital as part of the in-year reprioritisation exercise the following transfers will be actioned as part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Supplementary Budget 2023-24.

BEL Description	Comments	Amount £000
<b>MEG to MEG Transfers</b>		
HEFCW Programme Expenditure	To the Economy MEG for their share of the underspend on Degree Apprenticeships	-652
Post-16 Provision	To the Economy MEG to support a work experience programme and alumni network project which will be delivered by Careers Wales	-370
Post-16 Provision	From the Economy MEG for Youth Entrepreneurship in Further & Higher Education	360
Student Support Grants	From the H&SS MEG due to the extension of the NHS Wales Bursary arrangements	350
<b>Total MEG to MEG Transfers</b>		<b>-312</b>
<b>Reserve Transfers</b>		
Offender Learning	From the MOJ via Reserves to support the provision of education and skills in HMP and YOI Parc	3,738
Food & Nutrition in Schools	Reprofiling of co-operation agreement funding for UPFSM	7,400
<b>Total Reserve Transfers</b>		<b>11,138</b>
<b>TOTAL RESOURCE TRANSFERS – 2nd SUPP BUDGET</b>		<b>10,826</b>

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**ANNEX E – Regional Consortia School Improvement Grant (RCSIG) allocations for 2023-24**

Funding Description	All Wales 2023-24 £
Regional support for curriculum and assessment reform	£3,400,000
Schools curriculum and assessment development, including National Networks and learning progression	£9,346,000
Regional support for Modern languages - (Modern Foreign Languages (Global Futures))	£462,000
Modern Foreign Languages – building capacity for MFL in the primary sector	
Regional Consortia support for primary international languages – this funding supports primary schools’ developments under CfW - <b>£238k</b>	£271,000
Primary international languages project – provides primary school teachers access to the Open University ‘Learning to teach Languages in Primary Schools’ project offering modules in French, German, Spanish and Mandarin - <b>£33k</b>	
Literacy & Numeracy Grant/ Support for Curriculum Improvements	£500,000
Primary LNF Oracy Scheme for Wales	£400,000
Digital Competence Framework	£100,000
Coding & Digital Skills	£300,000
Professional Learning funding for schools	£12,000,000
School-led professional learning, enquiry and research to realise curriculum	£3,000,000
Curriculum reform professional learning programme	£2,700,000
Professional learning for developing practice and reflection	£900,000
Teaching Assistants Learning Pathway	£950,000
A Level and Welsh Bacc PL	£650,000
Induction / Early Career support package	£250,000
Future Leadership Programme (Aspiring, middle leaders including Coaching & Mentoring support)	£850,000
Aspiring Headteachers Programme	£217,500
Welsh - Professional Development	£2,500,000
Welsh in education grant (WEG) (CSC and EAS only) (GWE and former ERW included in LAEG)	£1,829,316
All Age Schools	£65,000
Coaching and mentoring	£250,000
Pedagogy research design	£100,000
Supporting Vulnerable Learners	£75,000
National Welsh in Education Project Manager	£70,000
Welsh Medium Pilots	£33,442
Welsh-medium capacity grant	£271,000

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Funding Description	All Wales 2023-24 £
Remote instruction of Language and Literacy	£145,000
Education Improvement Grant for Schools (EIG) - Total (Less £462 MFL and WEG £500,754)	£115,196,246
Support Collaborative Working & Help Develop Capacity in Consortia - Helen Richards EAS	£70,000
Building Capacity in Leadership	£60,000
Professional Teaching Awards Cymru (PTAC)	£20,000
Multi-agency support approach, Programme Associate salary cost - (EAS only)	£3,636
Support for communications project	£30,000
National support for Curriculum Reform – Variation 1	£128,300
Welsh-medium capacity building grant 2023/24 academic year - Variation 1	£614,120
National Pedagogy Lead (Partneriaeth only) - Variation 1	£60,000
NPQH assessment for 193 candidates across Wales – Variation 2	£579,000
Pedagogy, Leadership and Professional Learning Professional Advisor - eLearning & Digital Project – for EAS only	£12,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£158,411,560</b>

All Wales 2023-24 £	Former ERW						
	CSC	EAS	GwE	Powys	NPT	Ceredigion	Partneriaeth
<b>158,411,560</b>	48,434,414	30,963,249	35,325,090	6,325,090	7,008,641	3,533,212	26,707,432

**ANNEX F – UPFSM Revenue Grant Allocations 2023-24**

Local Authority	2023-24 Total Allocation £m
Isle of Anglesey	1.592
Gwynedd	2.953
Conwy	2.231
Denbighshire	1.662
Flintshire	2.698
Wrexham	3.123
Powys	2.024
Ceredigion	1.608
Pembrokeshire	2.917
Carmarthenshire	3.509
Swansea	2.289
Neath Port Talbot	2.597
Bridgend	1.867
The Vale of Glamorgan	4.494
Rhondda Cynon Taf	4.636
Merthyr Tydfil	0.986
Caerphilly	4.204
Blaenau Gwent	1.403
Torfaen	2.004
Monmouthshire	2.050
Newport	4.024
Cardiff	8.116
<b>Wales Allocation</b>	<b>62.987</b>

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**ANNEX G – 2023-24 allocations for Further Education colleges**

	Full Time Allocation 2023/24 £	Part Time Allocation 2023/24 £	Deprivation Uplift £	Sparsity Uplift £	Welsh Medium Allowance £	3% Centrally Retained Allowance £	2% Maintenance Allowance £	Transition £	Total allocation 2023/24 £
Bridgend College	14,381,711	3,320,870	869,824	0	30,000	531,077	354,052	462,073	19,949,606
Cardiff & Vale College	30,215,277	9,460,417	2,914,525	0	30,000	1,190,271	793,514	514,173	45,118,176
Coleg Cambria	36,292,928	7,809,527	1,770,347	755,863	115,000	1,323,074	882,049	489,077	49,437,865
Coleg Gwent	41,231,076	8,391,496	2,989,205	0	230,000	1,488,677	992,451	592,416	55,915,322
Coleg Sir Gar	18,003,940	3,511,343	581,030	593,701	1,061,250	645,458	430,306	407,541	25,234,569
Coleg y Cymoedd	27,512,200	5,493,614	2,903,045	0	29,756	990,174	660,116	368,712	37,957,617
Gower College Swansea	24,410,566	4,082,981	1,855,343	0	115,000	854,806	569,871	0	31,888,567
Grwp Llandrillo Menai	31,989,185	6,784,553	1,663,234	2,517,412	2,156,250	1,163,212	775,475	1,281,013	48,330,334
Grwp NPTC Group	21,362,098	5,409,700	1,278,157	2,532,404	30,000	803,154	535,436	202,700	32,153,649
Merthyr Tydfil College	9,740,968	978,398	866,822	0	30,000	321,581	214,387	154,957	12,307,114
Pembrokeshire College	11,526,790	1,995,069	292,828	367,873	30,000	405,656	270,437	0	14,888,653
St David's Catholic Sixth Form College	7,411,258	242,910	611,056	0	15,000	229,625	153,083	0	8,662,933
Adult Learning Wales	0	5,698,940	338,497	190,425	30,243	170,968	113,979	0	6,543,052
	<b>274,077,998</b>	<b>63,179,818</b>	<b>18,933,914</b>	<b>6,957,679</b>	<b>3,902,499</b>	<b>10,117,734</b>	<b>6,745,156</b>	<b>4,472,660</b>	<b>388,387,458</b>

Pack Page 94

**ANNEX H**

**Grants: 2022-23 outturn and forecast expenditure over the following four years for: Full-time undergraduate (FTUG) Tuition Fee Grant; Part-time undergraduate (PTUG) Tuition Fee Grant; PTUG Maintenance Grant; Masters Finance grant element; Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA); and Welsh Government Learning Grant (Further Education) (WGLG(FE)).**

	£000s				
Grants	2022-23 expenditure	2023-24 forecast	2024-25 forecast	2025-26 forecast	2026-27 forecast
Full-time undergraduate (FTUG) Tuition Fee Grant	2,366	-	-	-	-
FTUG Maintenance Grant	238,239	233,690	232,679	234,386	235,732
Part-time undergraduate (PTUG) Tuition Fee Grant	2,029	497	535	576	623
PTUG Maintenance Grant	34,836	40,380	42,617	44,197	44,493
Masters Finance grant element	20,035	19,550	19,285	19,136	19,023
Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)	12,259	15,836	17,442	17,451	17,457
Welsh Government Learning Grant (Further Education)	3,346	2,982	2,657	2,368	2,111

**Loans provision: 2022-23 outturn, and forecast loan outlay over the following four years for: FTUG tuition fee and maintenance loan outlay and Resource Accounting and Budgeting (RAB) charge, PTUG tuition fee and maintenance loan outlay and RAB charge, Masters Finance loan element and RAB charge, Doctoral loan outlay and RAB charge**

	£000s				
Loan	2022-23 expenditure	2023-24 forecast	2024-25 forecast	2025-26 forecast	2026-27 forecast
FTUG tuition fee and maintenance loan outlay	794,516	846,739	898,339	934,780	973,243
PTUG tuition fee and maintenance loan outlay	33,262	40,314	45,476	48,469	50,224
Masters Finance loan element	59,994	61,383	62,480	63,316	65,063
Doctoral loan outlay	4,372	4,577	4,701	4,783	4,912

	£000s				
RAB	2022-23 expenditure	2023-24 forecast	2024-25 forecast	2025-26 forecast	2026-27 forecast
FTUG tuition fee and maintenance @ RAB	39,037	34,081	52,750	77,233	93,900
PTUG tuition fee and maintenance loan @ RAB	1,605	3,110	4,533	5,892	5,439
Masters Finance loan @ RAB	-	-	-	-	-
Doctoral loan @ RAB	264	463	557	641	531





**Comisiynydd  
Plant Cymru**

Children's  
Commissioner  
for **Wales**

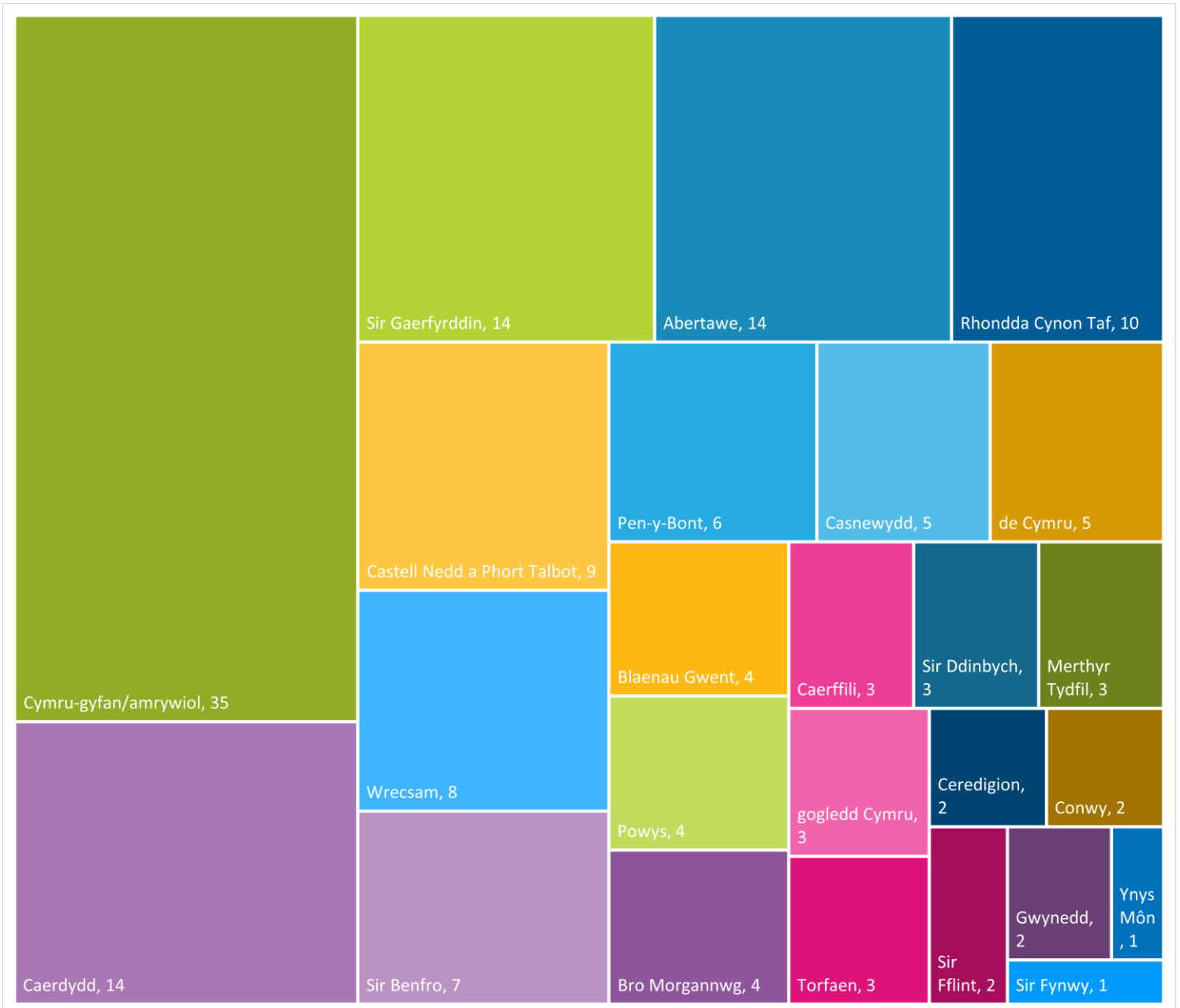
# Agenda Item 3.1



## Gwaith cyfranogaeth yn ystod y cyfnod 1 Ebrill 2022 – 31 Mawrth 2023

Yn ystod ein sesiwn craffu ar ein hadroddiad blynyddol a chyfrifon mwyaf diweddar, fe wnaethon ni addo danfon mwy o wybodaeth ynghylch ein gwaith cyfranogaeth cwblhaodd aelodau'r tîm, gan gynnwys y Comisiynydd, yn ystod y cyfnod 1 Ebrill 2022 – 31 Mawrth 2023.

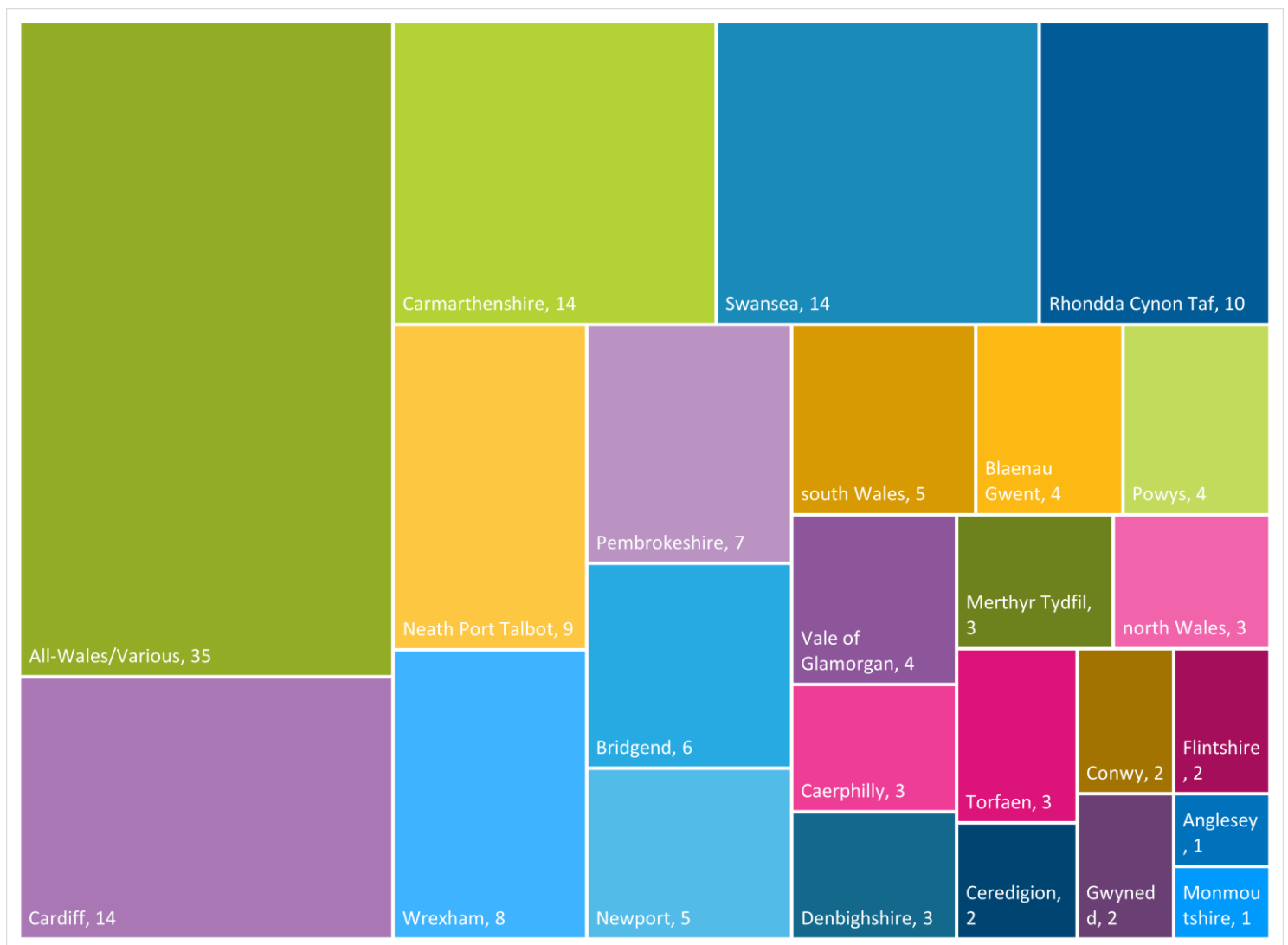
Isod, fe welwch dabl sy'n cynnwys nifer o ymweliadau i bob awdurdod lleol. Mae'r tabl yn cynnwys nifer o ymweliadau gan gynnwys manylion digwyddiadau 'gogledd Cymru', digwyddiadau 'de Cymru' a digwyddiadau 'Cymru-gyfan/amrywiol'. Mae ffigurau 'gogledd Cymru' a 'de Cymru' yn ymwneud â gwaith cyfranogaeth fyddai'n galluogi plant a phobl ifanc o nifer / holl awdurdodau lleol gogledd Cymru neu de Cymru i fynychu. Mae'r ffigur 'Cymru-gyfan/amrywiol' yn ymwneud â gwaith cyfranogaeth wnaeth alluogi plant a phobl ifanc o ar draws Cymru fynychu.



## Participation work during period 1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023

During the scrutiny session of our latest Annual Report and Accounts, we promised to follow up with a breakdown of participation activity undertaken by the team, including the Commissioner, during the period 1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023.

Below is a table outlining activity per local authority. The table contains the number of visits per local authority as well as details of 'north Wales' events, 'south Wales' events and 'all-Wales/various' events. Our 'north Wales' and 'south Wales' numbers relate to participation work that would enable children and young people from a number/all of north Wales-based or south Wales-based local authorities to attend. Our 'all-Wales/various' number relates to participation work that would enable children and young people from across Wales to attend.



# Agenda Item 3.2

**Y Pwyllgor Plant, Pobl Ifanc  
ac Addysg**

**Children, Young People  
and Education Committee**

Julie James MS

Minister for Climate Change

**Senedd Cymru**

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**Welsh Parliament**

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0300 200 6565

10 January 2024

## **Formal response to the Welsh Government's consultation on the White Paper on ending homelessness in Wales**

Dear Julie,

This letter, and its annex, is a formal response to proposals in the Welsh Government's White Paper on ending homelessness in Wales. Our response focuses on the areas that are directly relevant to our work on radical reform for care experienced children and young people as set out in our report 'If not now, then when?' published in May 2023.

We are pleased to note that the White Paper says Welsh Government has considered our report as part of the development of the proposed reforms. There are several very welcome proposals in the White Paper that are in line with the recommendations in our report.

However the scale of disadvantage facing young people leaving care cannot be underestimated. Our report found that care experience is a "predictable route" into homelessness and indicates that as many as 1 in 4 care leavers are homeless when they turn 18.<sup>1</sup> We therefore urge you to accept the 9 recommendations we set out in the annex to this letter.

In combination, these recommendations will greatly assist Welsh Government and local authorities to act as the best 'corporate parents' they can be. In our report we said:

*"Anybody claiming that the state is doing its corporate parenting job well should consider whether they would be happy for their own child to be cared for by that*

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<sup>1</sup> Welsh Parliament, 'If not now, then when?', May 2023, pages 122-123



*system. Whether any good parent would want that for their own child. We do not believe that they would. Corporate parents in Wales must do much, much better.”<sup>2</sup>*

In your role as the Minister responsible for housing, and acknowledging that having a roof over a young person’s head is the most basic safeguard any ‘good parent’ would provide, we call on you to ensure that care leavers in Wales have much stronger protections in some aspects of this White Paper than are currently proposed.

A particular issue we want to highlight is one that is often overlooked. The housing needs of care experienced parents can be complex and yet have a significant impact of whether their own birth children can remain in their care. We heard time and again that housing issues were often a key factor when decisions are being made in the family court about whether their own children can remain in their care. We have made two recommendations in this regard.

A key recommendation which we want to emphasise for all care leavers, including care experienced parents, is our view that a sixth category entitled to ‘reasonable preference’ should be created for people who are care experienced regardless of homelessness status, in order to avoid them entering the homeless system to access social housing. You will be aware that this is in line with the recommendations of the Welsh Government’s Expert Group Review.

During our inquiry we heard many warm words and stated good intentions about corporate parenting for care experienced children and young people. Yet so many times we heard directly from young people that these are not being translated into concrete actions and did not make a genuine difference to their lives, even at times of crisis.

Based on the direct lived experience of the many care leavers in Wales that we had the privilege to speak to, it is clear that significant changes are needed in order for housing to play its vital part as a corporate parent.

We look forward to seeing these White Paper proposals develop even further for the benefit of all care experienced young people.

I have copied in the Chair of the Local Government and Housing Committee due to our committees’ mutual interest in these issues.

Yours sincerely,



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<sup>2</sup> Welsh Parliament, ‘If not now, then when?’, May 2023, page 6

Jayne Bryant MS  
Chair

Cc. John Griffiths MS  
Chair of the Local Government and Housing Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.



# Annex: Response from the Children, Young People and Education Committee

This response draws directly on the evidence we gathered, and conclusions we reached, during our inquiry into radical reform for care experienced children and young people.

Despite care leavers having existing legal rights, our inquiry showed that young people in care in Wales face a cliff edge of support when they turn 18. We heard that, in reality, the level of support they receive after turning 18, and certainly after turning 21, is very low, or in some young people's experience completely non-existent.

We heard that care experience is a "predictable route" into homelessness and that as many as 1 in 4 care leavers are homeless when they turn 18.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, we make 9 recommendations to the White Paper proposals with the aim of ensuring that in respect of housing and homelessness, Welsh Government and local authorities act as the best 'corporate parents' they can be.

An issue which is often overlooked are the housing needs of care experienced parents. We heard time and again that housing issues were often a key factor when decisions are being made in the family court about whether their own children can remain in their care. We have therefore made a specific recommendation in this regard.

## Entering the homelessness system

During our work we heard that not all parts of a local authority understood their corporate parenting role and therefore do not fulfil their duties. Llamau told us that "there is still an expectation for many young people who are care experienced to have to go through the homelessness route, and that is wrong."<sup>4</sup> As you will be aware, care leavers can become homeless directly after leaving care or once a placement has broken down.

We are therefore very pleased to see proposals for clarifying within legislation that for those leaving social care or the youth justice system it is "expressly prohibited" to use the homelessness system as a route out of care or youth justice. We also fully support the emphasis that planning should be done, and arrangements made for accommodation in advance.

The White Paper proposes strengthening existing corporate parenting responsibilities to ensure individuals aged 16 and 17 years who are homeless or at risk of homelessness do not fall between

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<sup>3</sup> Welsh Parliament, *'If not now, then when?'*, May 2023, pages 122-123

<sup>4</sup> Welsh Parliament, *'If not now, then when?'*, May 2023, page 122

services, and social services and homelessness services work in 'true partnership' to secure suitable accommodation and any broader support.

**Recommendation 1:** The Welsh Government needs to be more explicit about the practical expectations of its homelessness proposals that social services and housing services work 'in true partnership' as set out in the White Paper. It must be clear what this means in practice to ensure that care experienced young people have improved access to safe and suitable accommodation.

## Priority need

We welcome the proposal for care experienced people of any age to have priority need status and urge the Welsh Government to act swiftly in creating the new priority need category, using existing powers in section 72(1) of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014.

The Committee understands the rationale proposed in the White Paper to abolish the priority need test and welcomes its ambition in terms of raising standards for all. Nevertheless we are concerned about the potential unintended negative consequences this proposal could have on care experienced young people who we know to be much more at risk of homelessness and are much less likely to have family they can stay with temporarily. NYAS Cymru has expressed concern to us that the proposal to abolish priority need status may have negative consequences for care experienced young people.<sup>5</sup> Llamau has told us that whilst it fully supports the removal of priority need, there are a number of issues relating to care experienced young people that require further consideration by Welsh Government including:

- **Increased Competition for Limited Housing:** Abolishing the priority need test may lead to increased competition for limited housing resources. Care leavers and care-experienced children, who may already face challenges in securing stable accommodation, could face additional difficulties if there is heightened demand for housing.
- **Potential Delay in Housing Assistance:** With the removal of the priority need test, there might be a need for a lead-in time for the new system to take effect. During this period, care leavers and care-experienced individuals may experience delays in accessing housing assistance, which could contribute to their vulnerability.
- **Specific Vulnerabilities of Care Leavers:** Care leavers often face unique challenges, including the transition to independent living without family support. The removal of the priority need test should be accompanied by measures to address the specific

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<sup>5</sup> NYAS, 'Additional information', November 2023





vulnerabilities of care leavers, ensuring they receive the necessary support during the transition to independent living.

- **Impact on Homelessness Prevention:** The priority need test can serve as a mechanism to identify and prioritize vulnerable individuals at risk of homelessness. Its removal may impact the effectiveness of homelessness prevention efforts, particularly for care leavers who may be at a higher risk of housing instability.
- **Need for Adequate Support Services:** As part of the broader strategy, it's crucial to ensure that care leavers have access to support services that address their unique needs. This includes mental health support, education and employment assistance, and other services that contribute to their overall well-being and housing stability.
- **Resource Allocation:** Local authorities will still need to manage their resources effectively and determine how individuals, including care leavers, are prioritized for housing allocations. Clear guidance and policies should be in place to ensure fair and transparent resource allocation that considers the specific needs of care leavers.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** The impact of the abolition of the priority need test on care leavers should be closely monitored and evaluated. This includes assessing whether care leavers are disproportionately affected, and if so, adjustments to the system may be necessary to address any unintended consequences.<sup>6</sup>

**Recommendation 2:** Welsh Government must act swiftly to create a new priority need category for care experienced people up to the age of 25 to have priority need using existing powers in section 72(1) of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014.

**Recommendation 3:** Welsh Government must, consulting with care experienced young people and the stakeholders representing their interests, undertake an impact assessment to identify any unintended negative consequences of abolishing priority need on care experienced people who present as homeless, or are at risk of homelessness. The unintended consequences should include those identified in this response. Welsh Government must then ensure revised legislative proposals have clear measures in place to mitigate these risks.

### **Local connection (homelessness)**

The White Paper proposes that care experienced people are exempt from local connection provisions in homelessness legislation. We are pleased to see this aligns with our recommendation that local connection should be disregarded for care experienced people, where we concluded:

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<sup>6</sup> Llamau, 'Additional information', December 2023

*"Care experienced children usually have very little - if any - choice over where they are placed. It will almost certainly not be the fault of the care leaver themselves if they do not have a connection to the local area they want to live in."*<sup>7</sup>

**We support Welsh Government's proposals to exempt care experienced people from local connection provisions in homelessness legislation.**

## **Suitability of temporary accommodation**

We heard directly from young people who had been placed in inappropriate and even unsafe accommodation on both a temporary and long-term basis. Extensive evidence was also provided about unregulated accommodation (accommodation services that do not provide 'care', such as B&Bs, Air BnBs and hostels) and calls for all such inappropriate accommodation to be made illegal in Wales.

We note the White Paper refers to 171 occasions on which care leavers aged 18 to 21 were placed in Bed and Breakfasts in 2022-23 and it proposes to clarify within legislation that:

- For people aged under 25, the use of unsuitable temporary accommodation, including Bed and Breakfasts and shared accommodation, should not be permitted for any time period.
- Where people of this age group are to be housed in temporary accommodation, it must be supported accommodation.
- Those aged 16-17 must never be accommodated in adult focussed, unsupported temporary accommodation.

**We support Welsh Government's proposals in relation to temporary accommodation.**

## **Social housing allocations**

During our inquiry, we heard that care experienced young people often struggle to access social housing. Members heard that, due to the insufficiency of the social housing stock, up to 500 people can be in competition for one property. The Committee concluded that:

*"There should be systems in place to avoid young people leaving care having to present as homeless. Housing legislation should ensure care experience is given the highest priority for both local authorities' and Registered Social Landlords' allocation policies."*

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<sup>7</sup> Welsh Parliament, *'If not now, then when?'*, May 2023, page 123



We recommended that care experienced people should have the highest priority in housing allocation schemes.<sup>8</sup>

We note the White Paper makes a number of proposals aimed at increasing the proportion of social lets to homeless households. One proposal is to assign additional preference to homeless households over and above other reasonable preference categories. A further proposal is to 'allow for' care experienced people who are homeless (also termed in that paragraph homeless care leavers) to have additional preference. We are not clear from the current wording whether this would be a discretionary power for local authorities.

We note this is different from the Expert Review Panel's recommendation that people who are care experienced should form a sixth category entitled to reasonable preference.<sup>9</sup> Our view on the benefit of the Expert Review Panel's proposal is that it would not require applicants to be homeless. By contrast, the White Paper proposal for (potentially discretionary) additional preference would only be available to care leavers who are homeless. We also have concerns that since the section uses different terms to refer to care leavers, it is unclear whether the intention is for this to apply to all care experienced people, as per the Expert Review Panel's recommendation, or only at the point of leaving care.

**Recommendation 4:** A sixth category entitled to 'reasonable preference' must be created for people who are care experienced regardless of homelessness status, to avoid them entering the homeless system to access social housing.

**Recommendation 5:** Legislation must ensure read across and consistency between homelessness and housing allocations and prevent any social housing provider or local authority 're-applying' local connection criteria to care experienced people via their own allocation schemes.

## Multi-agency cooperation

Corporate parenting aims to promote collective responsibility across services and local authorities to safeguard the welfare and to promote the life chances of looked after children. The principle behind it is that a good corporate parent would seek the same outcomes for children in their care that a good parent would want for their own child. The Welsh Government sets out that local authorities "must act for the children they look after as any responsible and conscientious parent would act."<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Welsh Parliament, 'If not now, then when?', May 2023, pages 123-124

<sup>9</sup> Expert Review Panel, 'Ending homelessness in Wales: A legislative review', 2023, page 47

<sup>10</sup> Welsh Government, 'Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014: Part 6 Code of practice looked after and accommodated children', April 2018, page 70

Our report recommended that corporate parenting is given a strong legislative footing by giving a range of public bodies, including but not limited to local authorities, specific corporate parenting duties and expanding their duties in relation to care experienced children and young people.<sup>11</sup>

The White Paper proposes to create a new duty on a range of bodies - such as social services departments, health boards, and landlords - to identify those at risk of homelessness and take action to mitigate that risk. It also proposes a statutory case co-ordination approach where individuals require input from three or more public services.

**Recommendation 6:** Welsh Government must strengthen its proposals to ensure mandatory cooperation between relevant public bodies in relation to all care experienced young people and clarification of what this means in practice.

## Increasing housing supply

During our inquiry, we heard that both availability and appropriateness of accommodation is a problem and that the lack of housing is “a major crisis”. Care Inspectorate Wales wrote that greater multi-agency accountability beyond social services was needed to deliver more accommodation options for young people.<sup>12</sup>

Other professionals stressed to us that care experienced birth parents need access to housing that’s suitable for a new-born. We heard that care experienced birth parents are more likely than other parents to have their children temporarily removed or be asked to attend mother and baby units. We heard that most birth parents have no choice but to give up their home accommodation when they move into a parenting assessment centre because they can’t afford to keep it. Where the parent is a social housing tenant, the local authority or housing association may want them to end their tenancy.<sup>13</sup>

We are pleased to see the White Paper notes that care leavers should be taken into account when assessing the need for temporary supported housing.

The White Paper states that Local Housing Market Assessments (LHMAs) “are vital in determining local housing requirements and form a key part of Local Development Plans”. We note the Expert Review Panel also considered whether legislative change could help support building of the right homes to meet local housing need, particularly homelessness-related need. The Panel recommended that section 87 of the Local Government Act 2003 is amended to require local authorities to take into

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<sup>11</sup> Welsh Parliament, ‘If not now, then when?’, May 2023, pages 43-45

<sup>12</sup> Welsh Parliament, ‘If not now, then when?’, May 2023, pages 120-121

<sup>13</sup> Welsh Parliament, ‘If not now, then when?’, May 2023, page 76



account their homelessness review and strategy, and the current and future levels of homelessness in their area, when drawing up their housing strategy and Local Housing Market Assessment (LHMA).<sup>14</sup>

With substantial rises in the numbers of children in care is more vital than ever that LHMA's accurately reflect the current and future needs of care experienced people, including care experienced parents.

**Recommendation 7:** Welsh Government must restate in the new housing legislation the requirement for relevant public bodies to cooperate with one another in relation to all care experienced young people.

**Recommendation 8:** Legislation must be in place to ensure Local Housing Market Assessments (and in turn Local Development Plans) accurately reflect the current and future needs of care experienced young people, including care experienced parents.

**Recommendation 9:** In order to provide a baseline of relevant housing issues in light of the significant rises in the numbers of care experienced children (which will lead to many more care leavers), Welsh Government must commission a one-off specific Wales wide research project into the current and anticipated housing needs of care experienced young people and care experienced parents.

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<sup>14</sup> Expert Review Panel, 'Ending homelessness in Wales: A legislative review', 2023, page 52

# Agenda Item 3.3

Vaughan Gething AS/MS  
Gweinidog yr Economi  
Minister for Economy



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

Jayne Bryant MS  
Chair of Children, Young People and  
Education Committee

[SeneddChildren@senedd.wales](mailto:SeneddChildren@senedd.wales)

Our ref/Ein cyf: VG-PO-004-24

10 January 2024

Dear Jayne,

Thank you for your letter on behalf of the Children, Young People and Education committee (CYPE).

I note the question posed in the letter was similar to what you asked in the Senedd following my Oral Statement (OS) on the Plan for Employability & Skills. You asked how the Employability and Skills Plan can support the ability of parents and carers of disabled children and young people to secure and maintain employment as well as how are we ensuring families can access inclusive and accessible education and childcare that provides children with educational and play opportunities. As such I have combined my response to both the CYPE letter, and your OS follow up questions.

The Programme for Government (PfG) commits us to fund more childcare for families where the parents are in education and training or on the edge of work to help them upskill, prepare for the labour market or secure more sustainable employment whilst bridging the financial burden of childcare costs. This commitment directly feeds into the Plan for Employability and Skills.

As part of the PfG Commitment, we have expanded the Childcare Offer for Wales eligibility criteria from September 2022. The Offer now includes parents in education and training and in its first academic year supported an additional 675 parents.

Those parents may now also benefit from the Childcare Offer Additional Support Grant (ASG). To ensure that the childcare element of the Offer is inclusive to eligible children who need additional support, help has been made available to local authorities by means of a separate funding stream referred to as the ASG. Local authorities can draw on this funding to help ensure that eligible children with additional needs are able to access the childcare

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[YPCCGB@llyw.cymru](mailto:YPCCGB@llyw.cymru) [PSCGMET@gov.wales](mailto:PSCGMET@gov.wales)

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

element of the Offer in the same way as other eligible children, including through one-to-one support and specialist equipment.

In 23/24, £2m was allocated across local authorities to respond to these needs, this is a demand-led grant, and we are committed to providing support to parents and childcare settings where needed.

The Welsh Government also aims to reduce the costs of childcare by funding expanded provision through the Flying Start programme. Flying Start is targeted at children living in disadvantaged areas of Wales, however, as part of the Cooperation Agreement with Plaid Cymru, we have committed to and started, the expansion of Flying Start for all 2-year-olds in Wales.

Flying Start guidance requires local authorities to accommodate children with Additional Learning Needs (ALN) and disabilities to enable them to engage with provision so far as this is practicable and in the best interest of the child. Flying Start parenting guidance recognises that some parents may require special consideration and those providing parenting support may need to adapt services to accommodate their particular needs. This includes parents of children with disabilities and or ALN.

Phase 2 of the Flying Start expansion programme began in April 2023 and is focussing specifically on expansion of Flying Start childcare to more 2-year-olds. We expect to support more than 9,500 extra two-year-olds across Wales to access quality Flying Start childcare during Phase 2 during 2023-24 and 2024-25.

Our national mission is to achieve high standards and aspirations for all, ensuring all children are able to access the education they are entitled to. That is why equity and inclusion are at the heart of the reforms we're making to the education system in Wales. This was highlighted in the evidence provided to the Committee on 29 November 2023, by the Minister for Education and Welsh Language, along with Minister for Social Justice and Deputy Minister for Social Services, as part of the Committee's inquiry into childcare and education access for disabled children.

Implementation of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act and the [Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales](#) are a key part of the education reforms in Wales. This ensures that where learners aged 0-25 require Additional Learning Provision (ALP) to meet an additional learning need, that provision is properly planned for and protected in a statutory plan called an Individual Development Plan (IDP). The Act supports a person-centred approach. This new way of working puts children and families in the middle and makes sure they are involved in all aspects of decision making.

To help us understand whether the new system is meeting needs we have funded SNAP Cymru to deliver ALN information events for parents and carers on our behalf. We are listening to the personal experiences shared by families at these events.

To hear the voices of children we have funded Children in Wales to establish a participation programme to amplify the powerful young voices of ALN and disabled learners providing them with the opportunity and support to tell us about their education journey in their own words.

The feedback and experience of children and their families will play a crucial role in the ongoing evaluation into the effectiveness of the new ALN system. They contribute enormously to our understanding of the new system's implementation on the ground.

I am committed to ensuring all parents and carers are able to secure and maintain employment including those of disabled children and children with additional learning needs.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vaughan Gething". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'V' and a long, sweeping tail on the 'g'.

**Vaughan Gething AS/MS**  
Gweinidog yr Economi  
Minister for Economy